



1875

# TWO YEARS OF THE EASTERN QUESTION.

## CHAPTER I

### THE TROAD.

THEIR MEETINGS.—A TRIP TO TROY.—THE FLICK OF A STRANGER—  
A THREE DAYS' RIDE.—THE PLAINS OF TROY.—THE SITE OF TROY.—  
SOLDIERS AND TROOP.—TROY, 1888.

Snows were melting and politics were waxing low :  
The days lengthened out and time hung heavily on  
our hands : Lent was over, the almond-trees were  
in blossom, and with the storks and the swallows,  
those weather-wise birds of passage, the tourists had  
begun their migrations from the general East and  
South to their own clime North-west, multitudes of  
them from Bagday or Cairo took Constantinople on  
their way to Brindisi or Marseilles, and they walked  
about our streets and lounged in our shops with  
eager wistful countenances, the briskness of their  
movements, the interest they took <sup>in</sup> <sup>all</sup> they saw

and novel strategy, and succeeded, partially, in contrasting with the terror contracted by our People's standards during our long period of dull liberation.

Their liveliness was catching—we began to feel that we too were legends, gifted with the banner as well as with the power of locomotion. The world was before us, where to choose, as it were, without outstripping the boundaries of the Seven continents: we had the rails from the *Savages* (India to America), and the *Home* (Russia to Israel), and the steamers would, if we liked, waft us to *Venus* and the *Twelve*, to *Sardinia* and *Romania*, to *Black*, *Delos*, and *Cyprus*, and all the islands still named by the beauty of the goddesses who loved to disport themselves and taste the pleasures of mortal life in their states.

At noon and at half-past-noon—We had put out our hands, and the shadows cast by our garments were no longer cast with a single, unvarying stroke. A new sun shone in the sky—Shadows took to the air, and old things in the universe (People, birds, beasts, etc.) began to move at two times. We stood up, then, and began again. A new *Abdül Aziz* has gone together, now, or before, with him and his team, his coming together, which is to give a new turn to Turkey's destiny, have had time to reveal themselves. The world will wag on though we may not be there to tell of it—so let our nation be pre-occupied, and in little matters

for which point of the compass our bark be steering.

After paddling for five long winter months in the land of unsavoury Pera, a three days' gipsying about the plains of old Troy could not fail to bring unspeakable relief. We bought Schliemann's book at Weiss's, and were soon at home between Simois and Scamander, raving about Helen's rouge pot, and Andromache's golden comb, and Astyanax's silver mug, and all the other wonders and treasures of which we might chance to be the discoverers. We made arrangements a pleasant English fellow-traveller and I— on the 10th of April, in the reading-room of that Hôtel d'Angleterre, the genial chimney-corner of which had enabled us to while away the after-dinner hours of many a dreary evening; and on the following day (Tuesday), at five p.m., we were leaving the Golden Horn on board the *Schizote*, one of the best of the unfortunate Trinaeria Steam Navigation Company's vessels, bound to Smyrna, the Pireus, and Marseilles. As we had wisely reckoned, the recent disaster to the *Agrigento* had scared all chance passengers from the vessels of that ill-famed Sicilian line, so that we had nearly the whole cabin to ourselves. There was, however, no lack of Greeks, Jews, Turks, and others of that steerage multitude which reads no newspapers, and is strong in that comfortable fatalistic faith common to all Orientals, whether Christians or Moham— on a mat at all times equally ready for any amount of mills which



passengers bound to Sinanik Kalesi, the town which the Europeans call Dardanelles, and the key to the strait from which it takes its name. I was up and on deck at daybreak, as my wont is, not uninterested in seeing how life instinctively crept into that shapeless mass of bodies hitherto buried in sleep. It was, again, painful, and yet amusing, to see those poor muffled bundles of womankind unfolding themselves one by one as the morning light broke in upon them, bidding them bestir themselves for another day of toil for all, of pain for most of them; the poor bewildered creatures hurrying their preparations for landing, struggling to go through their abridged toilet duties under difficulties, smoothing their rumpled drapery like waterfowl preening their feathers, making one great armful of children and pillows, and all the time pulling up and down that ever-clipping linen gag of a yashmak, meant to hide features which it would probably have been as great a horror for us to behold as for them to display. At last they were all rigged, or nearly so, and ready to obey the echoes of their surly loads, who emerged from the remote regions of the fore-cabin, each man silently and, as it were, sulkily and reluctantly snuggling out and claiming his belongings. Truly whether or not Mohammed ever denied the existence of a soul in woman, it may be safely asserted<sup>ed</sup> with the exception of a few favourite slaves<sup>ed</sup> the blooming youth, Turkish women must ~~judge~~ <sup>judge</sup>, on ever soul they are born with knocked out stands

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mental and zealous attendant, but not a very safe guide, though a native of the Troad. He had been engaged, as he said, in the capacity of a courier with many a party of tourists in this region, and yet was it a loss which way to look for Mount Ida, and very positive that the summit of the mountain had no snow when he was on the spot only ten days before. By the side of the diagmaon rode the man in charge of our cattle, mounted on a pack-horse with our light kit; a stout thick-set Turk, like any other Turk, and warranted like his beasts, to travel, starve, and hold his tongue from sunrise to sunset, his frame and his temper equally proof against fatigue or mishap.

From Dardanellis we rode for three hours across the plain coasting the Hellespont in a south westerly direction past Kefli Point, the ruins of Dardanus, the quarantine station and the site of the British Hospital of Crimean War recollection, and hence struck across the ridge on the top of which stands the village which the Turks call *Shahinez* and the Greeks *Rekeni*—every spot in this region puzzling the stranger with a double designation, precisely as everything in Homer's time had a name among the gods and a name among mortals. From *Rekeni*, after a brief halt and a solar lunch, we descended into the valley of the *Dounbach*, or what is supposed to have been the *Simois*, and forded the stream, and proceeded uphill to another ridge, on the culminant and prominent point of which stands





proceeded to Yeni Keui, or New-town, a Greek village on the coast, where we lunched with the grandest expectation of land and water before us, and, fording the Scamander on our way back, we went through the marshy grounds of Kibritli, and closed our second day's march at Akshu-Keui, where our guide again became our host. We had thus made a round of about thirty miles, following the Scamander in its semi-circular course.

Again we were on the road the third day, Friday morning, at the same hour of 10, and in the same order of march, with Mr. Frederick Calvert for our guide. We made straight for Hisarlik, where we examined at more leisure the extensive excavations of Dr. Schliemann at New Troy, we then crossed the old and the new bed of the Scamander, and visited the camp and the naval station of the Greeks of the famous siege. We clambered up the *Ajaccium* or Tomb and Temple of Ajax, long a landmark and a hallowed spot for ancient seamen. We then followed the old coast line, crossing several creeks or stone bridges; went past the *Achilleion*, or Tomb of Achilles, now a Turkish cemetery, bare of cypress trees, but thickly overgrown with rank grass, and farther on saw the Tumulus of Patroclus and that of Festus, Caracalla's murdered friend. We then pulled up at Yeni Sh-hr, a village on the Sigean Promontory, the Greek inhabitants of which laid out our lunch of Easter eggs, bread, and walnuts on a mat under the shade of those Nine Wind-mills which

reached the spot suspected as the image tank, and it had to be abandoned. A short time later the canoe and a large drift made by the descent of the S. entered the "H" at the extreme point of which lies the K. and K. hills, where the Circle on the South, and the entrance of the "H" lie opposite to the "A" on the North. We then crossed the S. mountain at K. and K., and went back to our new station, eight miles at A. and K. Almost on the same route we had to go down the mountain, over the "H" Saturday, about noon, we entered it, and by the way we had crossed it before. It was a fine day, and the "H" report, as we were talking, thanks to the "A" station, was very interesting. We took a good look at the "A" station, and then went on through the plain of the "Y" and

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## THE TROOP.

streams, the Doumbrek, or "Simois;" the Kendir or "Thymbraïas;" and the Mendero, or "Seamander." All these classical names must be understood rest on hypothesis—the former two flowing into the old or new bed of the last-named, as all other out to the sea is precluded by a swelling ridge, which runs along the coast from Ujek, above Besika Br to the Sigacum Promontory, at the entrance of the Hellespont. The lowlands in the plain and the valleys, being thus shut in on all sides but one, are swampy, and, owing to the want of good drainage and culture, unhealthy and desolate. But the verdure of the fields and pastures, and the crops growing here and there where patches of the soil have been but scratched, give evidence of unsurpassed fertility, and the brushwood on the hills, and the park-like groves of oak on the mountain slopes, conjure up to the imagination the dense forests by which the uplands must in primitive times have been mantled, feeding the moisture, checking the rush of the waters, and tempering the extremes of heat and cold in one of the most genial and salubrious climates on earth's surface. At every step as we rode, the freshness, the vastness, the homeliness, the wildness of the region we traversed, delighted us by their increasing variety, while, when we drew rein on the summit of any of the ridges, on any of the sites to which tradition attaches peculiar importance, the panorama of land and sea which stretched before us, the great landmarks which dotted the horizon around



Athos, at eighty miles distance from us as the crow flies.

Nothing in the world could be more enjoyable than the weather that befriended us throughout the trip. Nothing more fresh and vivid than the blossoms and young foliage on every tree, nothing more joyous than the music of lark and nightingale, alternating with the notes of frog and owl in that perpetual succession of sun and moonlight, nothing more peaceful than the herds and flocks lowing and bleating in those levels, than the lowly stork-haunted habitations, and the peasants themselves, forgetting, as it were, all difference of race and creed, living in harmony and security with wide-open cottage doors, neutralising by their innocence, the baneful influence of their vile Government, the Greek, by mere thrift and good cottage, insensibly, and yet irresistibly, ousting the more indolent and desponding Mussulman. Such a sweet, solitary home as Mr Frederick Culvert had contrived to build for himself on that hallowed ground, close to the ruins of the Temple of the Thymbrean Apollo, such a farm as, with little capital and much industry, he was converting into a princely estate, might well wear from the world many a weary heart and clip the wings of many an unsatisfied ambition.

And over this idyllic paradise where once a frail woman's beauty arrayed Asia and Europe in arms, the battles of Troy are once more fought by scholars bent on fishing historical truth out of the deep well

of a poetical myth, bewitching themselves and the world by their dissertations as to what and where was Troy, and establishing theories whose verity itself seems almost hopelessly in doubt. Was the site of Priamus' Troy at Hissarlik, on the spot where Ilium Novum subsequently arose, and where Dr. Schliemann has lately opened the earth to so great a depth and extent, or was it on the more sublime ground near Bonnarlishi, round the fall of Balidagh, where men are supposed to have traced the circuit of the wall of Pergamus, and even to have brought Hector's tomb into light? All these questions have been and must be answered by the light of Homer's verse and by the bearings of the landmarks of Ida, the Scamander, Imbros, Tenedos, the Sigæum, and other hills, streams, islands, and headlands to which frequent allusions occur in the great epic. Listen to MacLaren on one side and to La Chevalier on the other, and so how satisfied every party leader and partisan is with his own view, how plausibly he stands by his own and demolishes his adversary's argument, how how much has been how much may be, said on both sides—as indeed on all sides of all questions—and then tell us who shall decide where so many and such valiant doctors disagree? "The identity of the site of Troy," one will tell us, "may be made out by two springs, one warm and one cold, flowing into, or from which flows, the Scamander." Ay, but what if at Hissarlik the springs which must have been there have dried up, and those at Bonnar-

bashi are not *two* but *forty*, and all cold? "Round Homer's Troy," says another, "flowed Scamander." But what if the river has altered its course, and its confluence with the Simois has been removed from its original spot? What, besides, if the names are misapplied, if what we call Simois were Homer's Scamander, and if the sources of one river, which it seemed natural to trace to the mountains, lay, after all, in the plain? "Troy," a third teaches us, "or at least its citadel, occupied a lofty, craggy, and conspicuous situation." But what if time has smoothed down its asperities, and the accumulation of the soil for thirty or forty centuries has levelled its slope? "Troy," a fourth reasons, "was not too far and not too near the sea." But what if land has encroached upon the water, and the line of the shore has advanced far beyond its ancient limit? It is even so. Every critic, like a bad tailor, strives to fit the ground to his own theory when at a loss how to shape the theory so as to suit the particulars of the locality. Every one proves that his own pet Troy is Homer's Troy, or at least that it would be amazingly like it, had not untoward circumstances conspired to make it so confoundedly unlike.

Notwithstanding this irreconcilable discrepancy of opinion, however, it is not easy to deny that Dr. Schliemann, Mr. Frank Calvert, and last, but not least, Mr. Gladstone, all partisans of Hissarlik, have good reasons in their favour, and that Bounarbashi seems, indeed, too far inland, and the ground of it



too rugged to allow of chariot-races being run to its immediate vicinity, or of Achilles chasing the dying Hector three times round the walls of the city. But, on the other hand, the site of Hissalik is mean and circumscribed to a small space not very lofty, and by no means craggy or rugged, and the area which is assigned to the town is barely sufficient to accommodate a moderate sized citadel "about the size of Trafalgar Square" as Dr Schliemann himself said to Mr. Clouston. The world is doubtless greatly indebted to the good German doctor by whose rare energy and at whose heavy expense such extensive excavations have been made, and so many valuable relics of antiquity have been brought into light. But it is difficult to look into the broad and deep trenches he has opened, to view the mountains of rubbish he has heaped up, and to examine the basements and foundations of the buildings he has laid bare without feeling as if the conclusions to which his discoveries have led him took away a little from the Palace of Priam which he has found a series of tiny small chambers, where it seems hardly possible that the King's fifty daughters and a whole host of courtiers could have been lodged. The Royal Palace which rises athwart it on a higher foundation is carrying on progress, allowing no way either into or beyond it. Nothing more puzzling, also, than the hole in which the doctor has laid the foundation of the Tower of

Caune: the trench from behind which the Trojan bowmen shot their arrows, or the seat immediately close to that trench, from which the ladies "with the long Court trains" sat, apparently to their imminent peril, watching the chances of the fight as it raged in the plain beneath. Nothing more wonderful than the "sacrificial altar in the Temple of Minerva, with the drain for carrying away the blood of the victims, the altar a mere lump of earth which is rapidly crumbling to dust, and of which hardly a vestige will probably be found by any visitor looking for it six months hence.

I am in the predicament of that Frenchman who said of himself, "*Ce que je sais, je le sais mal, mais ce que j'ignore, je l'ignore parfaitement.*" I know so absolutely nothing of the subject, that I dare not even imagine that Dr. Schliemann has been carried away by his sanguine enthusiasm, but certainly a chill of disappointment and scepticism seized me as I traced on the ground the localities upon which such great names have been bestowed and to which such high importance is assigned in the doctor's map. Homer's Troy dwindles and shrinks down to almost contemptible proportions in Dr. Schliemann's hands, and one is amazed and humbled to find out of what wretched mole-hills the great mountain of the Iliad and Odyssey has been evolved. Dr. Schliemann had, doubtless, very arduous problems to solve, very serious difficulties to contend with. He had to deal with a Troy built on the site of an old Troy

several centuries after Priam's city was levelled with the ground, or, perhaps, of more than one old Troy, for Ugo Foscolo, no mean Hellenist and Homerist, said :

\* " *Ille nasa due volte e dice usata  
Splendidamente sulle mura sue,  
Per far poi bello Polium e troia  
Ai fatati Polchi.*"

The date of Priam's city is, by Dr. Schliemann, forced back far beyond the period assigned to his fall by common chronology (2000 years beyond Homer's own age). The ground to which the doctor devoted his search revealed to him, in superimposed layers, the edifices, the weapons, the implements, and even the nicknacks of four, or perhaps five, distinct epochs, which, in the very act of excavation, could not fail to be thrown together, and so jumbled as eventually to defy classification and description.

It were highly desirable that men of mature knowledge and sound judgment should give Dr. Schliemann's achievements due consideration, and that they should put the ingenious, yet perhaps hasty conclusions he has arrived at, to the test of actual observation on the spot, and it would also be most just and reasonable that the Doctor should, as he hopes, obtain from the Ottoman Government the long-solicited firman empowering him to pursue those labours by which he has won so great a name for himself at the same time that he has bestowed an

inestimable benefit on the learned world. It may happen then that Mr. Gladstone will find himself at liberty to fulfil the promise he made to visit the Doctor in his house or tent at Hissarlik, where the inspection of those ruins may suggest a modification of some of the views developed by the English scholar and statesman in his "*Homeric Synchronism*." should he ever prepare a new edition of the work.\*

For my own part, I am content to live with the present age, and to take at second-hand whatever knowledge better men may supply with respect to the past. A visit to the Troad, I think, will have the effect of satisfying many men—as it has satisfied me—as to the length, width, and depth of their own blessed ignorance. No human research, however active, can keep pace with the rapidity of the obliterating force of time. The pall of many ages lies on the ruins of the world of Homeric tradition. Unlike the Roman Campagna, the plain of Troy can be travelled over for miles without ever, or very rarely, meeting those relics with which one might

\* Events have turned out somewhat at variance with these sanguine prognostics. Dr. Schliemann, during the winter of 1873, in which he was at Miesville's hotel in Pera with his handsome and enthusiastic Athenian wife, succeeded in obtaining a firman, allowing him to continue his labours at Troy; but he came into collision with the local Ottoman authorities at Darlanlies, and, being driven from the spot, turned his energies to the excavations at Mycenæ, the vaults of which have almost eclipsed his most splendid achievements on the alleged site of Priam's city.

expect so renowned a ground to be strewn. Whatever is dead in the old Trojan world is also buried. Where the antiquarian's spade has not been at work, the smooth land tells no tale. Of the cities, only the sites are pointed out. The mounds are only tumuli. And therein, perhaps, lies the peculiar charm of the Troad. The region is so weary as to have attained a second infancy. It is to all appearance not a land used up or exhausted, but rather a virgin soil, ready to be drained, tilled, sowed, planted, and peopled anew. The impression he or was, at least, to me, in the lovely spring weather, that of freshness and sweetness, of vigour and health.

## CHAPTER II.

## COUNTRY LIFE IN TURKEY.

DIPLOMATIC ALLEGORISATION. — THE BOSPHORUS. — THERAPIA AND  
 CLIVILLIA. — THE KISSING OF EARTH AND ASIA. — LIFE AT BOMBAY  
 ISTANBUL. — RIDES AND DRIVES. — A DAY AT BROSSEA.

WHEN I first came to these, to me unknown, Turkish regions, towards the end of November, 1875, Sir Henry Elliot was still lingering alone at his country residence on the Bosphorus. All his diplomatic colleagues were re-assembled in Pera, and for six long winter months political and social life was concentrated within the narrow compass of that detestable metropolitan suburb. All intercourse between the Ambassadors and the Government of the Sublime Porte was carried on across the bridges; the Ministers were to be seen either at their offices or at their *hôtels*, or town houses, and their ante-chambers were incessantly beset by dragomen from the Embassies, and by the Sultan's aides-de-camp, or chamberlains from Dolmabahché. But from May to November the whole Bosphorus becomes the seat of Government. The Grand Vizier and his colleagues remove to their own *gallis* or marine villas at Bebek, Can-

dilli, or other spots on either side of the Strait ; the Sultan must be followed at any of the palaces or kiosques to which it may be his pleasure to betake himself on the European or Asiatic shore ; while the representatives of foreign Powers cluster together around the deep bay which separates Therapia from Buyukdere, near that upper end of the Bosphorus, the shores of which are fanned by the cool northern breezes of the Black Sea. Diplomatic business in ordinary times loses not a little of its briskness owing to the decentralisation and dispersion ; and, in spite of the means of locomotion supplied by State carriages, despatch and gun-boats, steam launches, and Bucentaur-like many-oared caiques, official visits, banquets, and other festivities become unfrequent, the heat of the season inclining high and mighty personages to the indulgence of a happy rural leisure and repose. It is just at this time of the year, when the capital of the Ottoman Empire stretches throughout the whole twenty miles' length of the Bosphorus, that the unmatched loveliness of this channel is seen to the greatest advantage ; it is at this season that it assumes all the charms with which the hand of Nature and the work of man have combined to invest it. Already, in spite of the unusually late spring and the prevalence of nipping northern gales, the pent-up life of Stamboul, of Pera, and Galata was beginning to pour itself out to its wonted haunts in the immediate neighbourhood ; the favourite spots of Flamoor and Mashlak were all alive with the gay,

though clumsy, dresses of yashmaked Turkish ladies ; and all along the borders of Eyoob's cemetery, or on the sward of the fresh meadows of the "Sweet Waters Valley," such scenes of quiet, decorous enjoyment presented themselves to the stranger's eye as he had, perhaps, never witnessed at any of the choicest gatherings at Richmond Park or Chiswick Gardens, at Longchamps or the Bois. There are no waters like those "Sweet Waters," no turf like the soft moist turf under the trees of the Sultan's park at Kiagatch-hanch ; nowhere can one see such myriads of swift-gliding caiques as dart under the bridges of that pure stream at the top of the Golden Horn, as they come down at the close of a Friday outing, freighted with the inmates of the harems, the dark-eyed hanoums hugging their quaintly-dressed, happy, yet wildly-staring, open-mouthed children to their bosoms. The Turks, be it said to their praise, are fond of the open air, and they enjoy it all the more keenly as it is with the better half of them a rare treat, and the other half objects to the locomotion by which its blessings can be attained. Walking as mere exercise comes not natural to the Osmanlis ; their idea of earthly bliss is to sit in a boat, to squat cross-legged on the grass or on a mat under the trees or the hundred tents or booths reared as cafés wherever custom brings them together—at Flamoor, near the top of Boolgoorloo, wherever shade and fresh spring are to be had—to sit or lie there hour after hour, smoking much, talking little, and gazing with quiet



wonder, but without apparent ill-will, at the groups of Greeks, Armenians, and Franks flitting past them ; gazing at them, and giving no sign, unless spoken to ; but whenever civilly addressed, immediately removing the chibouque from their lips, and entering into conversation with a stately courtesy, and even with a jovial cordiality, completely belying the sternness of their impassive countenances. To see them, to see the ease and grace with which men of different race and hostile creed, men of all classes, blend together at these rustic rendezvous, the Mollah, the Softa, the squalid Dervish going past the veiled Armenian Bishop, the broad-brim-hatted Latin priest, the cowled Franciscan, and the flap-bonnetted Sister of Charity, one would fancy that all these people acknowledge each other as ministers of the same God of Peace, and that such untoward outbreaks as the massacres of Chios, of Damascus, of Jedda, of Salonica, and Bulgaria, are the mere fabrications of lying chroniclers ; for the normal state of this motley population of the Ottoman Empire is, after all, mutual forbearance and goodwill, and the outbursts of evil passions are almost invariably to be traced to the influence of rulers, who from the beginning founded their sway on division, and who, when urged to attempt reforms based on religious and political equality, plead their inability to overcome that popular fanaticism, which is simply the result of their own bigoted and ungenerous policy.

But, although the immediate neighbourhood of

Stamboul and Pera, of Scutari and Kadikeui, can boast of peculiar beauties of their own, they can scarcely be looked upon as parts of the Bosphorus; for, although views of that Strait and its magnificent opening on the Propontis may be obtained from almost every window of the towns and from the heights above them, one can hardly anywhere approach its shores, the sea-border being invaded either by the long line of Imperial Palaces from Top-haneh to Beshiktach, by barracks, arsenals, and other public buildings, or, finally, by long lines of straggling, dingy villages, which stretch on the European side as far as Arnaut Keui or Bebek, on the opposite shore, as far as Beylerbey and Candilli. The Bosphorus, as the guide-books tell us, is a channel formed by seven headlands, sloping down to the water's edge on the European side, and projecting towards as many bays on the Asiatic side; and there are again seven promontories on the side of Asia, confronting as many little gulfs on the side of Europe; the sea running like a river between the two banks, the projections of which are indented, and, as it were, dovetailed into each other, so as to obstruct and diversify the views at every step as one winds up from reach to reach, and from end to end. Upon leaving the southern entrance at Constantinople, where the three cities, the open Sea of Marmora, the Prince's Isles, and the Asiatic mountains present a unique panorama, the channel at once contracts itself between Ortakeui and Beylerbey, and reaches its

narrowest point between Bebek and Candilli, near the spot where Mohammed II built his two castles of Roumeli and Anatoli Hissar, facing one another on the two opposite hill-sides, about half-way between the two seas. The Strait widens again between Stenia and Kanuya, the Bay of Beikos and that of Buyukdere expanding into a lake, apparently closed in on all sides, at the end of which the channel proceeds in a straight northerly direction, allowing a view of its opening into the Black Sea between two other castles, the Roumeli and Anatoli Kavaks, and the two lighthouses, Roumeli and Anatoli Fanais.

The rugged nature of the two coasts and the facilities afforded by the water carriage have hitherto prevented the construction of good communication along shore. A railway on the European side, though often projected, has never been attempted, and the only tolerable carriage road from Pera to Buyukdere, achieved under European influence, has been made across the hills, *not* Mashlak, traversing a bleak and dreary region for a long track unrelieved by any view of the Straits; another road longer and more circuitous, but more interesting, comes up from Stamboul and Pera to the Sweet Waters Valley, and thence strikes across Bugas and the forest of Belgrade to Buyukdere. Along shore from village to village tracts of good road close to the water's edge are to be met with. From Therapia to Buyukdere on the left, and to Yenikeui on the right,

one can have a short, but pleasant, walk or ride or drive, with an unobstructed view ; while in the rear of these diplomatic villages bridle-paths are open to equestrians in every direction. On the Asiatic side ways and by-ways are even in a more imperfect condition, and the beauties of the country, which equal, to say the least, those of our own, or European side, are less easily accessible.

Viewed from the water either from the decks of the crowded steamers or from the soft cushions at the bottom of the luxurious caïques, the shores on either side present a series of picturesque lake-like landscapes, combining every imaginable variety of pleasing scenery. The hills are nowhere very lofty, the "Giant's Mountain" itself, opposite to Buyukdere, the culminating point, hardly, I should think, exceeding 800 feet. Those hills, also, are, as a rule, bare and desolate at the summits, and only here and there broken into bold crags and ravines on the slopes. Near the water's-edge and in the bosom of the little valleys the vegetation is deep and luxuriant ; but the eye wearies with that incessant succession of crowded habitations, those long rows of squalid wooden tenements of poor villages, hardly relieved by dwellings of higher pretensions, stately but inelegant villas of well-to-do Greeks and Armenians, also mostly of wood—"pasteboard houses," as they are called, flimsy and tawdry, in the very worst style of barbarous architecture, with here and there a Sultan's palace or kiosque, the *yali* of an ex-Grand Vizier,

an Ambassador's palace, a mosque with its minaret, or a sacred edifice, hallowed by a stone cross on its steeple. Silence, but not solitude, reigns on the Bosphorus. It is one of the great highways of all men and all things; the dove-like sailing yacht, the brown-canvassed fishing smack, the frail carque are perpetually thrust aside and tossed about in the wake of the puffing steamer as it breasts the tide, either bent on its distant cruise or plying from pier to pier to set its live freight at the various landing-places, where the bustle and jostling are almost as great as in the main street of Pera; flocks of water-birds, swarms of flying-fishes, and herds of bounding porpoises give those glittering waves a look of perpetual animation—but, withal, animation without gaiety. Many of the stations are Turkish villages; houses with blank fronts, with jealously-latticed windows, no sign of life at the rigidly-closed doors, hardly anywhere the sight of children playing in the gardens; no woman's face or shape, and only bundles of clothes, with muffled chins and noses, trooping up and down the piers where the steamer stops, waddling like scared geese, hurriedly but clumsily, on their broad down-at-heel slippers or heavy man's boots. The Turk, however, though still present, is far nowadays from having the Bosphorus all to himself. In mixed villages, or where the population is mostly Christian, and the people of the lower orders are to be seen "fraternising" with the Moslems, the eye is gladdened here and there by the sight of a

pretty face; the large weird eyes of the lovely Greek, the rich complexion and full round form of the fair Armenian, court your attention, as the beauty sits in the morning half hid by the thin, partly-drawn blinds of her casement, coy and demure, always pretending to shrink from your too eager gaze, yet always lingering there, insatiable of men's admiration; or on Sundays, at mass time, as she comes out to test the power of her charms, enhanced by the display of her sightly, though somewhat "loud," Frenchified finery. And again in more favoured spots, such as Buyukdere, where the broad quay has room for a fashionable promenade, there is social intercourse in the evening at every house door, the ladies gathering under their porticoes with tea and cards and harmless gossip, the gentlemen going round from group to group to give zest to the talk, in which corrupt Greek, bastard French, and Italian *lingua Franca* are blended or jumbled together in not unpleasing confusion.

Between Therapia and Buyukdere, round the bay, there is a distance of about three miles. Not only are most of the Embassies—the English, French, and Italian at Therapia, the Russian, German, and Greek at Buyukdere—now rustivating within this small compass, but consuls and judges and bankers and merchants of higher or lower degree have here their summer homes, and constitute a little Frank colony, swelled at frequent periods by European visitors, quartered at the various hotels,

and especially at Madame Petala's *Hôtel d'Angleterre*, a house of accommodation with an English landlady, combining many of the comforts with all the cleanliness and tidiness of a first-rate English establishment of the same description. Here or hereabouts a stranger will find plenty of good people to help him kill time; companions for a stroll along shore or for a longer walk, or for a ride into the forest of Belgrade, when he will soon find how necessary it is to go a little inland and away from the shores of the Bosphorus before its real beauties can be fully appreciated. In the rear of the bay, half-way between *Therapia*, and *Buyukdere*, there lies a rich valley, crossed in all its length by a broad avenue lined with trees, and shut in on both sides by woody knolls, with as much cultivation between their slopes and in the intervening flats as one may chance to see anywhere in backward Turkey. This is the road to Belgrade, and about three miles inland, where a magnificent aqueduct crosses the way, you advance in the midst of the glorious forest and go through it three miles farther to the village from which the forest itself takes its name. Such marvellously beautiful woodland scenery, such dense masses of rich blooming foliage, such wide sweeps of glorious uplands as are to be beheld here at this season I can hardly say that I ever saw before, though I have rambled over many of the lordly parks of which England is justly proud, and though many months have not elapsed since I visited Val-

lombrosa and others of the few forestal recesses that have as yet escaped the axe in the Apennines. From the heights of Belgrade the streams to which that primeval verdure imparts whatever moisture and freshness are still to be enjoyed in this region, branch out in every direction, some of them flowing down to the channel, some to the Black Sea, and two of them to the Golden Horn, forming those "Sweet Waters of Europe" which contribute the main element of enjoyment to the denizens of Pera and Stamboul. On both sides of the main avenue, as you advance, there open before you wide paths, canopied by the trees like galleries, cool and moist, and, indeed, damp and chilly as cellars in the hottest hours, where you can wander and be lost for hours and hours, allowing your steed to carry you by devious ways, either back to Therapia, Buyukdere, or any point on the Strait, or away to Kilia, or some other village on the Black Sea coast, or finally, down into some of the glens converging upon the Sweet Water Valley. Soft galloping grounds, steep stony paths, broad open glades, and intricate thickets, testing the strength and skill of your sure-footed nag, are to be had at discretion ; nor is the excitement of some little perilous adventure wanting ; for, although the scanty population of the forests is inoffensive and by no means unfriendly, there rove in these woods, here and there, people of doubtful character—runaway malefactors, deserters from the army, and ne'er-do-well Croat or Montenegrin labourers—



a meeting with whom would not always be pleasant unless you were one of a large party, or unless you had a ponderous six-shooter at your holster, or a pair of dainty Derringers in your waistcoat pockets, as well as a stout determination in your heart to use those weapons, and eke your loaded horse-whip, in defence of your beloved gold watch and chain.

From the many thousand acres of forest land that are still allowed to grow round Belgrade, one may imagine what the Bosphorus must have been when these same woods came down in unbroken sweeps to the water's-edge, as they did here and in other parts within the memory of living men; witness the "Seven Brothers" and other straggling clusters of giant chestnut, plane, beech, and oak trees, still surviving the slaughter of their generation, and forming land marks along shore at different points, where the Greeks of Therapia and Buyukdere have their *à fresco* cafés, their drinking and dancing gardens. If a ride along the Mashlak road from Pera to Buyukdere is now made dreary by a vast expanse of bare mungy pasture; if many of the hill-sides along the Stran are barely covered with thin, shaggy brushwood, if the valleys and shores, stripped of the kindly mantle which gave them freshness and fecundity, look now parched and blighted, barren and dreary, what is it owing to but to man's own vandalism, which has bared the ground of its natural vesture wherever either water or any other means of conveyance

favoured the removal of timber or firewood, recklessly clearing the ground without thinking of what use it might be put to by provident cultivation?

The Asiatic side of the Bosphorus is, as I was told, and as my own eyes could see, in every respect more beautiful than the European side. I had as yet seen little of it besides the most frequented spots behind Scutari and Kadikeui, and the range of hills between the panoramic height of Boolgoorloo and the tree-crowned summit of Candilli. An excursion to the Sweet Waters of Asia, to the valleys in the rear of Candilli itself and of Beikos, the ascent of that "Yousuhk Dagħ," or Giant Mountain, from which both seas at the Strait's end are to be seen, were all pleasures in store for the future. Indeed, various and rich as the beauties of the Bosphorus may be, I was by no means sure that they would in the end prove inexhaustible; for those whom diplomatic or other business condemned to a six months' residence at Therapia looked very much as if the charms of the spot palled upon them from long familiarity; as if their flowers and shrubs and magnificent park-like gardens were *toujours perdrie* to them. I heard some of them longing for the flesh-pots—*i.e.* the more engrossing employment, the excitement, the more frequent social intercourse—of Pera. They found the day, still more the evening, even the short summer evening, unconscionably long, the distress for company going so far that one might see an Excellency at a loss how otherwise to while away the weary hours between

dinner and bedtime, engaged with his secretary and dragoman at a game of whist "with dummy" — surely as terrible a Nemesis of solitary greatness as imagination can conjure up.

The pleasure of fault-finding and grumbling at the weather was, however, not denied to us. The Bosphorus belongs to the heaven-blessed climates of the earth, and those unfamiliar with other regions of the Mediterranean are apt to look on the lovely tints and shades which impart so much charm to its marine scenery as peculiar to this Strait; the climate of the Bosphorus, however, must not be brought to the test of "handsome is as handsome does." If pleasing to the eye, it is terribly trying to a man's constitution. These shores are haunted by damp fogs almost as frequently as those of the British Channel. There is hardly ever stillness in the air or water, a northern blast, which makes us shiver as if we were in Siberia, alternating at a few hours' interval with a heavy sirocco which cuts the very limbs from under us. In the midst of a dead calm the gust, as if of a hurricane, would at times suddenly sweep over us, startling us for about five minutes, and leaving us to wonder where the phenomenal blast had come from or where it had gone to. We were panting for rain throughout March and April, and we had quite a deluge in the last days of May. There was, in short, something harsh and fierce—something Turkish—in this gemal-looking Thracian atmosphere; something to remind us that we were still on earth, and that the Bosphorus

was not yet Paradise, much as in its best moments it looked like it.

Whether or not we succeeded in making ourselves at home at Petala Hotel, absence from it for any length of time was for that season out of the question; for political events were fast maturing around us, and the attitude of the population of the Ottoman capital began to inspire some ill-defined but natural and, at all events, invincible disquiet. No one dared allow himself a long holiday, and it was not without misgiving that we ventured on a picnic at the *Bend* (the grand Reservoir at the Aqueduct, in one of the loveliest bowers of the Belgrade forest), or at "Ovid's Tower," a lofty ruin-strewn knoll commanding a vast extent of weird solitude, or, more frequently, at Kilia, where, besides a long stretch of the bleak sandy coast, and a boundless expanse of the islandless Black Sea, we had the company of the gallant Turks of the lifeboat service, a set of hearty and lusty, grave and earnest, and withal sociable fellows, who, under the rule and discipline of English officers, turn out very heroes in the discharge of their dangerous duties, and submit to that lonely, dreary life with an easy resignation and cheerfulness which won our hearts, and made each of them a friend—proving, if proof were needed, of what excellent stuff this Osmanli nature is made, and to what admirable purposes it could be turned, if the master mind to fashion it were, as at Kilia, everywhere at hand. Now in one, now in another of these charming spots,

we sat down and pitched our tents, and had our lunch or supper *al fresco*, the young dancing on the green, and whiling away the time with games of forfeits and other innocent frolics, some times till a late hour, when the moon would rise and peep at us, as if stealthily and coquettishly, through her curtain of clouds.

One more somewhat longer excursion I ventured upon in the early days of May, and before my quarters at the Hôtel Petala were more than bespoken, and even then I travelled as one who looks upon his time as not his own, and fears to be missed from his post at the very moment his presence might be deemed most necessary; though experience ought to teach us that no man here below is indispensable, and the world will, under all circumstances, wag on as well without as with any of us. I went for a day to Broussa.

It cannot be said of Constantinople, as Dr. Johnson said of Scotland, that "the best sight he saw in it was the way out of it," for any relief one may feel at the prospect of quitting the place is embittered by the thought of the discomfort which must needs attend upon the journey. From Pera to Broussa there is barely an eight hours' distance, but you get over it by means of locomotion intensely Turkish—an *Azizieh* steamer of the Imperial Ottoman line, crowded to suffocation, as far as Moudania, and a slow coach, chosen out of a score of quaint, primitive, ramshackle vehicles, from the latter place to your destination—

the city of the Mysian Olympus, Broussa, the cradle of the Ottoman dynasty.

Your Eastern fellow-travellers contrive to make something very like a pigsty even of a decent French Messageries or of a well-conducted Austrian Lloyd boat. But what must a steamer be that plies under the flag of the Crescent and Star, and where what men call "Oriental refinement" is condensed and packed together within the limits of the narrowest possible space ! Picturesque variety of feature and complexion, gaudiness of colour, endless quaintness of garb and costume—all this there is in abundance, but you lack air and space to enjoy it, and the gratification of one of the senses involves the severest ordeal for the other four. You have to pick your steps over the squatting bodies of impassive Moslems ; you have to run the gauntlet of pushing, elbowing, jabbering Giaours. You soon feel as if you would give a kingdom for a few inches of ground. One half of the deck is set apart for the Turkish women's pen ; the rest is swathed in by awnings and curtains, which rob you of land and sea and sky, and your alternative lies between being stifled under canvas and bribing the steward for a perch on the plank between the paddle-boxes, where you are scourged by the wind, scorched by the sun, and smothered by the most villanous smoke men ever deemed fit for fuel.

No matter ! You are out of Pera ; you have passed the Seraglio Point ; you glide into Marmora, past the " Isles of the Blessed," or Prince's Islands ;

you steer for Cape Boz-burun, across the Gulf of Ismid, or Nicomedia, and there, at the end of five hours, you are in Moudania Bay, compassed on both sides by high mountain ridges, with the great mass of Keschisch Dagh, or Olympus, between them its head glittering with its royal crown of snow. At Moudania the considerate Greeks have spared you the sights and smells of their town. You are landed at the pier outside the walls, are fought for by the drivers of the expectant carriages, and are fortunate enough to find a seat in one of the best, together with one of those ubiquitous English aged couples whom the dread of bronchitis periodically banishes from their English homes for nine months in the year; and away you are up, up to the top of the ridge, and then down, down into the plain of old Bithynia, and at last, just half an hour before sunset, you reach its capital, where, after a short squabbling for quarters at the *Hotel du Mont Olympus* you look out and wonder whether you are still on earth, or whether it is into heaven that your good fortune has wafted you.

The happiest regions for mortals are found where the heat of semi-tropical sun is tempered by the cool moisture of overhanging snow mountains. From his first landing at Moudania a traveller's sensations are the same as he experiences in Italy when standing at the foot of some great slope of the Alps or Apennines—say, on the plain of Pistoia in early spring, or in any of the Lombard or Piedmont

summer. We have  
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; nothing lovelier than  
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 ant mountain, its many  
 p to their crests, while  
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 feature in the landscape  
 ay, or from some culmi-  
 , which had withdrawn  
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done on the evening of  
 hat I had only one day  
 ) betimes on the follow-  
 about town and country  
 l and early-to-rise Turks  
 s of life. Here and there  
 ie doorways, hardy men  
 blankets on which they



had slept in the open air, and rubbed their eyes as they sat on their crossed legs, mumbling their morning prayer. Here a door was open, there a window ; first to stir were the women, pattering about in their slippers. As if to foster the illusion that I was somewhere about Como or Bergamo, not far from our hotel I passed a silk mill where black-eyed girls, brisk and merry as Manzoni's " Lucia," were trooping in by hundreds, their unveiled faces revealing them as Greek or Armenian, for Turkish women do not work at the factories, but just do a little cottage work, spinning and weaving within the sanctuary of the harem.

Sanctuary, indeed ! The stupid *yashmak*, the blank seclusion of women, are the Mussulman's curse ; the real obstacles in the way of his progress, and no good will come to Turkey till some John Stuart Mill, or Lady Salisbury, invades the Turkish home, proclaims Women's Rights to the *Hanooms*, tears off that veil, the thickness of which is proportionate to the ugliness of the face it is meant to conceal, and puts down that polygamy which is a nuisance even to those who profess to keep it up as a luxury. Domestic intimacy between woman and her master there is but little in this country, social intercourse there, of course, can be none. I marvelled on board the steamer how the poor, pent-up, closely-stowed-away wives, sundered from their husbands, could fare under their awnings during the five hours of the voyage from the Strait to the Bay.

I knew the separation would have been as strict and inexorable had the passage been of five days' or of five weeks' duration; and I thought of the dulness of which our ladies complain when they are left to their own drawing-room devices during the short quarter of an hour which custom consecrates to their lords' relaxation at the close of a long dinner's attention upon them. The necessity for each other's companionship is for man and woman equally constant and reciprocal, and it is the disregard of this fact that degrades the Turk, and causes his race to sink to so low a level among civilised nations. Here again, at Broussa, among those early risers, a proof of the little sympathy between the sexes, of the little regard of the stronger towards the weaker, occurred to me. A well-to-do household on their way to the country met me at the town gate. The head of the family rode in front, a gentleman in a many-coiled turban and furred overcoat, mounted on a fine ambling steed, and armed with his long, old-fashioned firelock, and after him trooped a lot of women and children on mules and donkeys, with a long train of beasts of burden, with slaves, luggage, and furniture, the whole string of animals tied to each other's tail, all following the guidance and impulse of a single will. Let the journey last ever so long, it might be safely betted that the man at the head of the caravan would not once turn round on his saddle, nor address one word to any of the human beings he had in tow. The relation is as

between master and slave, and the Turk will never understand that love, devotion, intelligence--all the best instincts and faculties of man--depend on freedom for development.

The upper town of Broussa is an intensely Mussulman establishment. It was one of the earliest settlements of the Osmanlis in the lands of the Byzantine Empire, and it continues exclusively Mohammedan to this day, the Greek and Armenian Christians and the Spanish-speaking Jews huddling away in the suburbs below. I must say one feels some respect for the Turk when he lives by himself, unaffected by contact with other races, and true to his primitive habits and ways. The sight of a man in Frank garb at so early an hour seemed to strike the good people as unusual, but there was no ill will or indiscreet curiosity, no unfriendly surprise evinced at my approach, and the slight bow or wave of the hand, or half-muttered word meant as salutation, was invariably returned with stately courtesy. Nay, in one instance, as I stopped before a marble fountain with three large spouts, at one of the gates, and, pulling off my hat and gloves, plunged my head into the deliciously cold water up to my neck, a venerable green-turbaned Hadji, who chanced to pass on his steed, actually drew rein in pure sympathy with my primitive ablutions, and uttered something about "Allah," which I believed I was perfectly justified in taking for a "Bless you, my son!"

How delightful it was to lounge up and down

those ravines, in and out of the gates, all alone at that early morning, to wander about the place without a *valet-de-plume*, or even a handbook; to venture into the curious windings of those narrow streets, to come unexpectedly on the dilapidated walls of towers and bastions; on the broad gates flanked by semi-cyclopean masonry, on the ruins of some lofty mosque shattered by the great earthquake; to gaze down upon the plain and the hills and the far-stretching suburbs, long straggling clusters of houses overtopped by endless domes and minarets, interspersed with the cypresses of cemeteries or the fruit-trees of pleasure-gardens; on the long ledges of white rocks lined at the top with rows of brown wooden dwellings. How lovely was the scene in its morning freshness, in its spring youth, the slight haze dissolving in the rays of the rising sun, peace and gladness and luxuriance everywhere blessing this land of irrepressible verdure. Even if driven from Europe, even if for ever denied the very sight of the Danube or the Bosphorus, one may fancy the Turk tarrying in his downfall at this his old home of Broussa, and solacing his grief for all his other losses in this "brightest gem" of his former diadem, even as the Moor, when the Crescent had to fall back from Toledo and Cordova and all Spain, lingered with desperate fondness on his last possession, Granada.

There were the mosques—the Green Mosque, Murad's and Bayazet's Mosques—and the Sultans' tomb, to be entered with slippered feet; the relics of

those old Sultans, their helmeted crowns and the tatters of their mouldering cloaks, to be inspected; there were bazaars and silk mills, and the renowned hot baths to be visited: some of the points with which my morning stroll had made me familiar to be gone over again. Either the old Turks or the Arabs who came with them were great artists, for one or two of those mosques and mausoleums are certainly wonders of mediæval architecture, quite as grand, and far more interesting, than the proud edifices which Mohammed and Solymán erected when the genius of the conquerors took fire by contact with the superior intelligence of the races which they came to subdue. There is nothing more admirable than some of the porcelain ornaments with which the walls of those temples and tombs are covered, or than the painted glass through which the light comes in at the windows. Unfortunately, even those relics of a better age, which have survived the havoc of time, are suffering not from man's neglect but from his rapacity; one of the beautiful demi-lunes in porcelain by which two of the windows in the tomb adjoining Murad's Mosque in the Shih Kigui suburb were surmounted has disappeared, being sold probably by the Mollahs to some of the *amateurs*, or *collecteurs-soleurs*, who prowl about like ghouls seeking what they may devour. Our Greek dragoman, Pericles, was so enthusiastic in his admiration of the remaining demi-lune that he expressed himself ready to buy it at 200*f*. He might have safely given £200 with

the certainty that in Paris or London it would fetch five times that sum.

We had gone through our town work before lunch, and during that meal we arranged a party for a ride up to the first plateau of Olympus. The prevalence of mud or dust in Peia, and the lack of diversions in that town, especially in the evening, have a tendency so to throw together the guests of the Missirie Hotel as to promote feelings of goodwill and comradeship among them. Several of those with whom I was on speaking terms in that well-known hostelry, though I knew not their names, and could not long remember their faces, chanced to meet at the Hôtel du Mont Olympe, and it was with five of them, German and English, that I started for the ascent. We crossed the town in all its length at a hand-gallop, and, threading our way through narrow and steep streets, we soon found ourselves in the open, with a very rough stony path winding upwards before us. The mountain on this side is all a mass of green, low brushwood for the most part, but with clusters of magnificent old oak, beech, and chestnut trees here and there. It took the best part of two hours to reach the plateau, our horses coming to a halt at frequent intervals to take breath. Beyond the first plateau, the guides tell you, there are three more plateaus, but the reality is that another hour's ride will take a traveller to the spot where he must part with his horse, whence an hour's walk will enable him to reach the snowy summit. Our goal was,

however, only the first plateau, the view from which is so vast and sublime that one cannot see what business any man can have to proceed farther, unless he hopes to catch Jupiter napping at the top.

The plateau is an "Alp" or pasture ground open to the south and east, a natural meadow with soft grass, studded with wild flowers at this season, fringed with brushwood, and only shut in in the rear by a ledge of rock, through which winds the path to the highest peak. The spot and its air were paradise; we strewed on the grass as carpets the overcoats we had taken with us as wrappers, and lay there for above an hour, neither warm nor cold, in a trance of unalloyed enjoyment. Broussa and part of the plain were lost to view, but the panorama of level country and mountain region was boundless. Before us, far away on our right, there stretched the broad sheets of Lakes Abullonia and Manyas, the former conspicuous for the lofty island in its middle, and, farther still, the blue sheen of the Sea of Marmora, bounded on our right by the mountain ridge which parts the Bay of Moudania from the Gulf of Ismid, and in the rear of it, in a gorge, Jenishehr and the Lake of Isnik, or Old Nice. From the very summit, we were told, with the aid of good glasses, one can see Constantinople and the Bosphorus, as well as Mount Ida, and the Dardanelles, and the shores and adjacent islands of the Troad; but there can be too much of a view, as of

every other good thing, and as we toiled, not without difficulty, on our downward way, we felt confident that we had climbed just high enough and not too high.

On the following morning we retraced our steps by carriage to Moudania, and by steamer to the Karakeui Bridge, landing at the spot where we had embarked. We had been recommended to follow another route from Broussa over the right-hand ridge to Gemlek, the view from the top of the ridge being described as of unsurpassed grandeur. But the road there is not passable by carriages, and a ride from end to end would take at least six hours. The morning was dark, besides, and the fog, which everywhere between the Straits is a frequent visitor, would have destroyed all chance of a grand sight. Of the darkness of the mountain mist which enveloped all things throughout our drive from Broussa to Moudania I should deem it superfluous to give a description. People who have their abode in England know what a fog is, and do not care to go from home to see it.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE SOFTAS.

COMING EVENTS.—PRECEDING SHADOWS.—SOFTAS AND PASHAS.—THE  
11TH OF MAY.—A SHORT STRUGGLE AND AN EASY VICTORY  
THEOCRACY IN THE EAST.—A PANIC AT BELE.—A SLAVE TALK

WITH the opening spring the catastrophe which we had all so long foreseen and foretold, was at last destined to break out. The Government of Abd-ul-Aziz, and Abd-ul-Aziz himself, were removed, and Turkey began the experiment of a new Grand Vizier, a new Ministry, a new Sultan.

There were not in Constantinople the elements of a popular revolution. The expected change could only be the result of a conspiracy. The people, indeed, had much to suffer, for civil war and national bankruptcy were upon them: the nonpayment of the coupons due in April, and the withholding of the salaries from public servants had caused a distress in the middle and lower ranks of society which gradually reached the higher. The Government of the Porte had been for the last ten months, and was still, contending with a mere handful of ill-armed mountaineers. It had raised, and was

raising against them an army which towards the end of April was more numerous, if not better equipped, than that which it had mustered against Russia at any period during the Crimean War. The resources of the country in men and money seemed utterly exhausted, and all the efforts of the Minister of Finance to come to terms either with the Galata bankers or with the European financiers failed to procure him the means of carrying on the public expenditure from day to day. No one was paid. There were moments when even officers of high rank, even foreigners in the Turkish service accustomed to receive their appointment through the Imperial Ottoman Bank, had vainly applied for their usual remittance, and then it was that the zeal of the most ardent Turkophiles was at the lowest ebb, and the cause of the ruling powers and of the Sovereign at their head seemed hopeless to all men.

The people, however, endured and made no sign. The teaching and example of European operatives now and then urged the workmen at the arsenals, or the stone-cutters at the new mosque which the Sultan was building at the cost of £T.2,000,000 on a hill in the rear of his palace at Beshiktash, into some feeble attempt at a strike; but there was hardly even an approach to serious disturbance, or it was instantly put down either by the dismissal of the men and by closing the works, or by the arrest and transportation of the ringleaders. At other times trials of woman's power were made, but not with much

better effect. Crowds of wives, daughters or mothers of minor State functionaries and petty tradesmen and mechanics would invade now the Porte, now the Seraskierate, now even the gates of the Sultan's palace, and cry out "that then men received no wages," that there was "no bread for themselves or their children." But nothing came of it. The women were allowed the privilege of their sex. They screamed till they were hoarse, and were suffered to go back unmolested, pacified by promises which could hardly be fulfilled. But it is difficult to say whether even such puny demonstrations sprang from spontaneous impulse, or whether they were simply the result of the instigation and bribery of parties interested in spreading alarm and creating the idea of a popular discontent which no doubt existed, but which would never have found an utterance had not the movement been got up by the Pashas in opposition, or even by some of the actual members of the Cabinet who were preparing the blow soon to be struck.

By a strange occurrence, I received, towards the end of April, a warning of what was coming. I walked one fine afternoon, from Candilli across the hills up to the top of Boolgoorloo, the hill above Scutari on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. I had with me an American, Mr. Norris, of the great gun manufactory of Remington and Co., frequently a companion of my early spring excursions. As we drew near the summit of the mountain famous for

the panorama it exhibits of the Strait and of a vast extent of the Sea of Marmora, we found there a Turkish officer of high rank reclining on the grass with two younger men—one in uniform, the other in plain clothes, in such garb as is now common among the young students or Softas of *La Jeune Turquie*. The officer who had come up with these two sons from his quarters at Beylerbey welcomed us with true Arab hospitality; gave us a drink of water, and we had with him a long conversation, which revealed in him a well-educated and travelled gentleman, able to convey his ideas in excellent French. Our talk turned on a variety of subjects, chiefly political. He complained of England's desertion of the Turkish cause, and of the increase of Russian influence over the Government of the Porte inevitably resulting from it; and we lamented the condition of the country, which it was natural to impute to misgovernment, all agreeing that matters could not proceed on the present footing without bringing about the utter ruin of the Ottoman Empire. "Yes," said our friendly Bey, "there must be reform, and there must be change, whether it be pacific or violent—and mark you, gentlemen, what I tell you to-day. Wait till the 18th of May, Old Style, and see what happens then." We tried—or, I should say, my inquisitive American friend tried—to obtain some explanation of this so positive and particular prophecy; but the good Osmanli would tell nothing more. "Look out for that day," he

again and again repeated, "the 18th of May—old Greek and Turkish style, the 30th in your Latin Calendar—and you shall see what you shall see;" and he requested me to take down the date in my memorandum-book. The man, who had been pleasant and humorous up to this moment, became now grave and earnest, as if most anxious to impress upon us that he was neither jesting nor attempting to hoax us, and I observed that the son, who wore no uniform, evinced some confusion and turned pale, as if alarmed at his father's imprudent communicativeness.

Notwithstanding the evident respectability of the man, and the insistence with which he pressed upon me the importance of his vague prediction, I paid at the time no great attention to his saying, for the expectation that something of great consequence was about to turn up was being spread in a variety of quarters, and there was no doubt that some plot was hatching, to which my friend the officer, with many others, might be privy. What struck me as very odd was only the so distinct appointment of a particular day for the anticipated event, a day which happened to coincide with a date dear to all Osmanlis—the anniversary of the taking of Constantinople by Mohammed II.—and a day which was as yet more than a month off.

The first day in May arose and found us still under the influence of the excitement caused by the announcement of the murder of the two Consuls at Salonica. It began to be whispered about that

Softas and low-class Mussulmans were purchasing revolvers and daggers with money supplied by persons plotting the overthrow of the Government. For several months, indeed, a very alarming stir had been observable among the Softas. By this name the Turks designate the students who are initiated in the upper branches of religious instruction in the mosques. Like the Fellows in an English University, these students constitute a corporation long after the completion of their learned pursuits; some of them supply candidates for the offices of Imams and Mollahs, but many hang on society. The number of these priestly vagabonds, some of them of the worst description, is very great in Constantinople—20,000, on the most moderate computation. In Stamboul, we were told, they were insulting and threatening the Greeks and Armenians, bidding them prepare for imminent death. Travellers were leaving *en masse*, resident Europeans were sending away their families, and incessant applications were made to the Embassies by persons apprehensive of approaching danger. Our diplomatists were sitting in permanence, and were said to be acting with the greatest energy and unanimity. The presence of European squadrons in the Bosphorus, and the organisation in Pera of a Frank Volunteer Militia, to be supported in case of need by men-of-war crews, it was thought could alone allay the general alarm.

On the 10th, it was reported that the Softas were parading the streets of Stamboul with cries of

"Down with the Grand Vizier!" On the following day these Softas, or students, headed by their *Hodjas*, or masters, and by some of the *Ulemas*, or doctors, to the number of several thousands, were in undisputed possession of the streets of Stamboul, and crowded round the Porte, clamouring for the removal of the Grand Vizier and the Sheik-ul-Islam or Head of the Mohammedan Religion--and mixing with these cries loud denunciations against the Russian Ambassador. There was no attempt at resistance on the part of the Government. In the afternoon of that day information came across the bridge that Mahmoud Nedim Pasha was no longer Grand Vizier. On repairing to his office at the Porte, Mahmoud was met by one of the aides-de-camp or private secretaries of the Sultan, who politely and in his Imperial master's name requested him to deliver up the State-seal. No further explanation was necessary. Mahmoud made a profound obeisance, and complied with his Sovereign's desire. He then called for his carriage, and without any other escort than his domestic attendants drove back to his caïque, and was rowed away to his country-house at Bebek, whence he soon afterwards proceeded to a more or less voluntary exile in some island of the Archipelago. Mehmed Rusidi was then sent for, who soon formed a new ministry, recalling Hussein Avni Pasha from his Government at Broussa, entrusting to him the War Department, and appointing Midhat Pasha Minister without port-

folio. A new Sheik-ul-Islam, Hassan Hairoullah, also came into office, and thus by a mere ministerial crisis this first storm was laid.

"All's well that ends well," is, however, only a sound maxim when one has reason to feel sure that the end has surely come. Turkey had now a new Government, and the Softas had become a power in the State. But was it certain that it would be a beneficent power, and that the Government they had set up was the one best suited to the situation? The name of the Softas had been till lately a word of dread. At the time of Mahmoud Nedim's projected reforms in December, 1875, it was said that these students apprehended in the contemplated measures a curtailment of the most valued privileges and immunities of the class to which they belonged; that they were appealing to the fanaticism of the people to rouse them against the Christians, and threatening these latter with massacres and incendiary fires. A batch of them—about thirty—had been thrown into prison in the early days of January, in consequence, it was said, of their turbulent conduct, and it was added, ludicrously enough, that some half score or so of their number had been thrown in sacks into the Bosphorus. Later in the winter they were said to have gone forth in bands to Bulgaria and other provinces, and to be stirring up the Circassians and kindling the plundering and murdering passions of these savages to bring about the excesses and atrocities of which the report was



soon to startle the world. The 11th of May raised the Softas to the height of popularity. Their movement, it was said, was a peaceful one—though they had bought so many revolvers—it had a political and not a religious character, though the Softas are “divinity and law students of a superior class,” in a community where divinity and law are one and the same thing, and though they obey the influence of the Ulemas, divinity doctors, whose exclusive rule is the Koran. Led by priests, these priestlings, we were told, had held meetings in the mosques; their deputations delivered into the Sultan’s hands petitions which, backed by their imposing processions at the head of a wondering multitude, had acted on the abject fears of a craven monarch with sufficient power to work out the desired effect.

The men who had been planning and were now accomplishing the revolution, the men who had aspired to power and were now grasping it—the Pashas—the Midhats, Hussein Avnis, and their friends—well knew what instruments the Softas could become in their hands. They looked upon the support of the army as insufficient, and they could not reckon on that of the utterly demoralised and helpless people. After the fall of the Janissaries, the Pashas reasoned, there was no power in the country to equal that of the Softas. Arbitrary political rule was based here on blind religious submission. The vices of the State had their roots in the corruption of the Church. The despot was in-

violable because he was invested with the character of an infallible Pontiff. The disorder admitted only of one treatment. The antidote must be sought where the poison lay. The enslavement of the people was the result of the perversion of Koran truth. But they, the Softas, were the interpreters of the Koran. They knew that the "Book" was the law of light and freedom; that the Koran did not countenance tyranny; that both its letter and its spirit breathed abhorrence to it; that it hallowed and enjoined resistance to it; that when the successor of Mohammed abused the authority which was committed to him for the people's good to work evil to his people, it became every good Mohammedan's duty to oppose him.

This is what the Softas were made to undertake. They were said to be the salt of the earth; they were the only educated class in the Mohammedan community, the depositaries of sacred knowledge, the vindicators of eternal truth. They went to work calmly and deliberately; they proceeded with firmness and unanimity; they conspired in the light of day. When their mind was made up they were at no loss for the means of conveying it to the Sultan. They knew enough of their Sovereign's character to feel sure that he would not withstand their unarmed intimation. But they were prepared for the worst. They had provided themselves with weapons; they were organised; they felt strong in their compact determination, and were secretly made so confident

of the sympathy and support of the army as to have a certainty that either there would be no struggle or only a short one, and of no doubtful issue.

Their work had only begun. They had, as yet, won only one battle. They had placed the man of their choice at the head of the Church; they had entrusted the reins of the State to the most honourable, if not to the steadiest hands. But they had not yet the Prime Minister they required. Yet a few days, it was expected, and Mehemet Rushdi would be only too happy to resign the Seals of State. Midhat was to be their Grand Vizier—the man who was bold enough to intimate to Abd-ul-Aziz that a Sultan must reign but not rule. And the Sultan would accept Midhat. There was no necessity the Sultan would not submit to under the influence of his fears. Already persons well acquainted with the palace described the Sovereign as haunted by incessant terrors; pacing his vast apartments with feverish restlessness, listening at the doors and windows, quaking at every sound. Abd-ul-Aziz was conquered ere the signal of strife was given. He would submit to any condition; for he could not fight, and he was well aware that his very eunuchs would not fight for him. Should he, however, show any stubbornness, the Softas had already made their terms with the heir apparent. Abd-ul-Aziz would be deposed, and his nephew, Munad, would reign in his stead.

This is what the Softas said to any who listened

to them. They were now the most popular of men ; the prejudices people harboured against them, as mere factious and bigoted priestlings, had made room for feelings of a totally opposite nature. They might be seen now mixing with men of all classes, walking arm-in-arm with members of the Greek or Armenian clergy, courting the notice and seeking the intercourse of European acquaintance. They laughed with courteous benevolence at the fears their late menacing attitude had inspired. Nothing was further from their minds, they said, than any design hostile to the Christians. The change they contemplated was purely political, and had nothing to do with religion. It was for the benefit of all Ottoman subjects, without distinction of race or creed, that they stood up ; and the first word they would write on their standard of liberties was perfect, universal toleration. They had no enemy in the country but the Sultan, or rather the system that made the Sultan such a ruler as he was, and by bringing either this or any other Sultan to his senses they were upholding a cause which was equally the Moslem's and the Giaour's.

All this sounded very plausible, and it carried conviction into many men's minds. "All that the Softas cry for," I heard a distinguished European resident say, "is Turkey for the Turks." But that is precisely the point, the definition of which is so puzzling. What is Turkey, and who are the Turks ? The difficulty here originally arose in any endeavour

to reconcile the conqueror with the vanquished race, to establish the *droit de conquête* on a footing compatible with the *droit de naissance*. That the Turks should deal as they liked with European immigrants might be deemed reasonable ; but it was not equally evident that they had a right to impose their will as a law upon the native non-Mussulman population, in the estimation of whom they, the Turks themselves, were still, after 400 years' dominion, merely intruding strangers. The Turks occupied the land by the right of the strongest ; unless they established a rule that made the vanquished their brethren, they must not wonder if Bosnians, Bulgarians, and others appealed to force for a reversal of what the fortune of war had inflicted on them during four centuries of galling servitude. This is what the Turks never understood, and what the Softas, with their cry of "Turkey for the Turks," seemed little to comprehend. It was not merely justice, benevolence, and humanity that the Christian demanded at the Mussulman's hands ; it was perfect political and religious equality, and how could this be obtained from any Government the Softas might set up ? How could it be reconciled with the Koran ? Even for the Mohammedans themselves the establishment of liberal institutions would prove an impracticable undertaking. In all civilised countries the greatest efforts are needed to emancipate the civil law from the trammels of religious authority ; but here the Koran summed up all civil as well as religious law. Were the Softas the

men to allow the promulgation of a civil code for the State, limiting the authority of the Holy Book to the precincts of the Church ?


The experiment of reconciling priestly ascendancy with liberal institutions was made in Rome thirty years ago, and the result was a war between the two principles, of which the world still awaits the final issue. Counsels of justice or expediency have done something to soften the cruel injunctions of the Koran; but there can be no doubt that its letter and its spirit are incompatible with the promotion of equal liberties. Take as an instance the massacre of the two Consuls at Salonica. The whole Mussulman population of that city is driven to frantic murderous fury by the intelligence that the conversion of a Christian girl to Mohammedanism is objected to by her co-religionaries. But the conversion of a Mohammedan girl to Christianity should, according to the Koran, be punished with death to the girl herself and to any who had a hand in estranging her from her creed. There you have a sample of a Turk's notions of religious fairness and reciprocity. The Turks are no bigots, it is true; their practice is, as a rule, better than their doctrine. They are not addicted to proselytism; they despise men of other creeds too much to care in the least about what may become of them in another world. Indeed, they are a jealous people, and they probably grudge a Giaour the charms of the houris in Mohammed's Paradise as they rob him of the sight of the faces and figures

of their women here on earth. Still, the law is there. There is the principle which accomplished the Osmanli's conquest. The vanquished Christian must either embrace Islamism or be put to death, unless he purchase his life by the payment of a tribute—*i.e.* by enslavement and vassalage.

The Turks cared as little about governing as about converting their new subjects. Satisfied with the exaction of a tribute, they allowed every race and creed its self-government. The Jews, the Armenians, the Greeks, and, in later times, the Latins, constituted so many distinct communities: and as the Mussulmans themselves put up with a sovereign who is at the same time a high priest, so they allowed or directed these non-Mussulman communities to organise themselves under their respective ecclesiastical hierarchies. Besides the Pasha the Caimakan, the Mudir, and other Mussulman authorities, the Bulgarian, Bosnian, Cretan, &c., had the yoke of his own patriarch, exarch, rabbi, or whatever else was the title of his high-priest, on his neck. Theocracy seemed destined at all times to be the rule in the East, and the priest of every denomination only tempered by his interference the harshness of Mohammedan domination to his flock on condition of claiming unbounded authority over them for himself. The only freedom to which Christians were allowed to aspire aimed at the extension of the ascendancy of their priesthood, and we were gravely told by European prints that the Bulgarians had no

reason to complain of Turkish rule, inasmuch as they had lately obtained "the emancipation of their church"—*i.e.* its separation from the Patriarchate of Constantinople—as if the interests of the Church, and of the Church only, made up the sum of all human wants and requirements.

Suppose the Softas triumphant throughout, would the Divinity students, the Mollas, Ulemas, Cadis, and other religious and civil functionaries meet, on equal terms, in a common chamber, the Greek patriarchs, the Bulgarian exarchs, and the other members of the priesthood? And could anything like a liberal, or even rational, legislation be expected from such a motley priestly assembly? This was what we were at no distant period to see. But, meanwhile, the system of the Ottoman Empire rested on the total want of education of all races and classes, on their gross ignorance and superstition, and their consequent incapability of combination and co-operation. Priestly rule had, perhaps, been hitherto the best imaginable. But light had begun for some time to dawn upon the people; it had roused them from their lethargy, it had set them against an intolerable state of things, which hardly admitted of reform, and clearly pointed to revolution. These Softas were rash enough, or, we may say, disinterested and high-minded enough, to give the signal for radical changes. Were they prepared to carry on their movement to its remotest consequences? Would they favour the development





of all those elements by which a new order of things might arise out of the complete disorganisation of the old system? Were they prepared to acknowledge all the equal rights of their fellow-citizens, to efface even the very name and remembrance of Moslem and Giaour, and to know of no other denomination than that of Ottoman subjects? They had achieved their storming of the Bastille. Would they proceed to the convocation of the States-General, to the abolition of all class or caste privileges? Would they place a civil law above each of all ecclesiastical institutions? What might come out of a revolution inaugurated on such terms it was difficult to foresee; but what was certain was, that the old Ottoman edifice must either be thoroughly renewed, or it would inevitably fall to pieces. The problem was by whom the work of utter demolition was to be attempted, and to whom the task of reconstruction might have to be entrusted. The Softas congratulated themselves on the peaceful and bloodless nature of their achievement, and they most unquestionably deserved the world's applause. Only we know of no country where revolutions have been effected with rose-water. Was Turkey the one community to which we were to look for such an unprecedented phenomenon? There lay the question.

Of this nature were the reflections suggested by that first stage of the Turkish revolution. Meanwhile the 10th and 11th of May were days of great

anxiety at Pera. The little English colony, haunted by the sense of impending danger, sent a deputation to Sir Henry Elliot, to inquire what provisions had been taken for the protection of their lives and property. The answer was that the Mediterranean Squadron would before long anchor at Besika Bay, outside the Dardanelles, and that the *stationnaire*, or despatch-boat *Antelope*, would receive the reinforcement of another vessel of the same description, the *Cockatrice*. The same precautions were taken by the representatives of other Powers, who, as I before stated, were sitting in a permanent committee; and it had been settled that at any signal given from the roof of the culminant and prominent Russian Embassy, all the crews of these little men-of-war should row ashore and fly to our rescue. A kind of rough-and-ready international guard was in the meanwhile being hastily organised, and in the evening of the 10th we were all clustering before the entrance of the spacious courtyard of the Russian Consulate in Pera main street, where about 500 Croats, enrolled by Count Zichy, the Austrian Ambassador, were assembled, and apparently quartered for the night. Grim and uncouth the men were, and hardly less forbidding in appearance than the Turks themselves. Their presence, however, there and in the street, especially about the premises of the Russian Ambassador, who was supposed to run the greatest danger, and had received many ominous warnings and threatening letters, had a re-

assuring effect, and we outlived the night without disturbance. The fears the Seres had inspired vanished with the return of day. One of these white-turbaned worthies, who had just bought a revolver in a shop where I happened to be, seeing a Christian who was haggling with the greensmith about a similar weapon, addressed him, saying, "What on earth do you *Feringhees* buy pistols for? Mussulmans buy them because they are afraid of the Christians, but you Christians have got room to fear us. It is not with you, but with our Government, that we have to settle accounts—and if we rid ourselves of the Sultan it will be as well for you as for us." So boldly outspoken had everybody in Turkey become, misgovernment prompting even the most timid with the recklessness of despair.

Something occurred however to rouse the apprehensions of our people—but the apprehension made was of no long duration. An English merchant and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Price were on the 10th at Stambul, visiting the celebrated Mosque of Sultan Achmed, accompanied by a German Professor, who had been for some time employed in an international College at Jemshouk. A Turkish lad, who had been expelled from that College for misconduct, recognised his late instructor, and pointing him out to the bystanders, cried out, "Look there! there is the man who wanted to make me a Christian." The words were scarcely spoken when a mob of *Softas* and other fanatics pressed upon the

German and his English friends, and it was not without a serious struggle that some police zaptiehs, happening to come up just in time, were able to rescue the strangers, who were taken to the police-station and there kept, as in the only safe haven, till late at night. A vast and noisy multitude all the time crowded the adjoining streets, till at last it became possible to smuggle the prisoners away by a back-door, and across the bridges, an escort of as many as twenty zaptiehs being deemed necessary for their safety. As a result of this occurrence, visits to the mosques were for the present forbidden to Christian visitors, and indeed we were recommended not to venture across the bridges without urgent necessity. Nothing hostile however appeared in the countenances or behaviour of the Turks I met, either in the streets of Pera or on my long and solitary rambles about the country.

The evil moment passed, and people began to be ashamed of themselves, and angry with their neighbours on account of the great scare they had had. There had however been sufficient cause of alarm, even independently of any dread one might have of an outburst of Mohammedan fanaticism.

There was, unfortunately, no lack of active elements for a sudden, general, and violent disturbance. Various circumstances—some of them of remote, some of recent date—had contributed to give the *proletariat* of the city enormous proportions. The sinking fortunes of some of the wealthiest families and the

exhaustion of the resources of the State, dependent on financial mismanagement, had increased the distress among the needy classes, and rendered them dependent for subsistence on private bounty or public charity. Such native industry as might be said to exist had of late undergone a rapid decline. Many of the operatives—masons, carpenters, etc.—were without employment, and the continued idleness of the pay of minor functionaries, and of the militia employed in Herzegovina and other revolted districts, had driven many families into a state of dire distress, and the sufferings of the masses had become unendurable. On the other hand the suburbs, and especially the quarters of Galata, have been almost from time immemorial the refuge of desperate characters from every region of the East and West, men of no fixed nationality, or claiming the protection of foreign flags, to which they have no ostensible title, and which they are not scrupulous about abusing and defrauding. Cossacks, Allemans, and other wild tribes from the Turkish provinces, living Hungarians, Danes, and other families, as well as Croats, Serbs, and other Slavs from the Austrian borders, together with the scum of all the Mediterranean, congregate in a pandemonium of the city of the Sultan, where their business, when they have any, is to say the least, of a precarious and equivocal nature. And to this that the armed force, on which the public peace depended, had been greatly reduced by sending off every available battalion to the various scenes of disturbance in

the provinces, and the police, always inefficient and corrupt, had been further weakened by the impossibility of supplying the zaptiehs with ammunition for their Snider rifles, and by the substitution of Minié muzzle-loaders taken from the arsenals to which they had been consigned as useless since the Crimean war.

In so vast a powder magazine as Constantinople is at all times, it is easy to imagine what explosion would be the result of the application of a match. In the midst of all these real and imaginary plots and counter-plots, and with the passions of a part of the populace raised to so high a pitch, one may fancy what effects could be expected from any riot or chance alarm of fire, or even wilful simultaneous incendiary attempts, which should suddenly rouse the population from their sleep. The fear, in my opinion, was far greater than the danger because, in the first place, the Turks are, on the whole, a good natured, lazy, and indolent people, and neither sanguinary nor fanatical, till their worst passions are aroused, and it is questionable whether the Softas' appeals to their bigotry would have found an echo anywhere, except among the ranks of the vilest populace; because, in the second place, Pera and Galata constituted a separate Christian and semi-European colony, where the Turks were only an insignificant minority, and where they were well aware that the Giaours, aided by the steepness and narrowness of the streets, could offer a very effectual

resistance, if the Embassies and Consulates *both* might themselves, as they were now rather sluggishly doing, of utilising the elements which the younger part of the population and the crews of the *stationnaires* or despatch-boats in harbour would supply for the organisation of a Christian militia. But the evil lay in the fact that Pera and Galata were wealthy trading places, and in any incipient disturbance the tills in the banks, the silk, jewellery, and other goods in the shops might tempt the cupidity as much of the Christian as of the Mohammedan populace, and determine a joint attack of all who might look for gain to the ruin of that portion of the community who had anything to lose. The first alarm in Pera was given by the report, not ill-founded, that the Sofias and the Mussulman ringleaders were ruled by them, were buying revolvers, daggers, and other weapons at the armourers' shops; but it was supposed, and indeed proved, that the Christians, on their own side, did not remain idle, and that as many pistols, knives, etc. were at this moment secretly hid in Christian pockets as there were arms of the same description ostentatiously stuck into Mussulman belts. As my friend the Sofia said the Moslems had as much reason to fear the Ghiaours as these latter had to dread the former; but the fact was that the well-to-do-population had good ground to be afraid of either, or both. Therein chiefly lay the perplexity of our diplomatic and consular agents, who, in every device they might resort to for our protection, had

to take care into whose hands they trusted their arms, lest the force that was to be organised for our defence should be turned to our injury. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Zichy, for instance, thought he could easily muster up 2000 Croats and other Slavonians, Austrian subjects, most of whom were employed as roadmakers, coal-heavers, and in other similar capacities ; but, although the majority of them were sufficiently inoffensive, there were black sheep among them, as in other large flocks ; and not a few of the robberies and worse outrages, of which the police, as a rule, took but little notice, might be traced to some of these stalwart strangers. The Italian, the French, and other colonies would have yielded, if not stouter, at least more respectable contingents. Unexceptionable, as well as undaunted, fighting men could also have been recruited among the Scotch or English operatives at the naval and artillery yards of Hasskui and Top-haneh, were it not that these good fellows lived out of Pera at some distance from us ; and the generality of what are called British subjects were Maltese, a race of men who, whether deservedly or not, did not enjoy the most enviable reputation in these Eastern regions.

I have entered into all these particulars, because the panic of which, as I said, we were all ashamed, or at which we were disposed to laugh after the event, was turned into a subject of violent political controversy, and General Ignatieff, who was at this moment the butt of the most savage attacks of our



Turkophiles, was charged with "filling his palace at night with a bodyguard of several hundred Montenegrins and Croats," all this defensive preparation being "*mere mise en scène*, to force, if possible, upon Europe the false impression that the Turks cannot keep order even in their capital." The Ambassador's "bodyguard" was, in short, stigmatised as an "acted lie." Be it so. I am not called upon to defend the Russian Ambassador from the imputation of lies, either acted or spoken. But these Turkophiles should not forget that they were among the members of the deputation who represented to Sir Henry Elliot that they did not deem themselves safe without the presence of the whole Mediterranean fleet at the entrance of the Golden Horn, and that Sir Henry Elliot, when applied to by a lady who kept a boarding-school for girls in the Grand Rue, asking whether she should break up the establishment and dismiss her pupils, sent word in return that "he could answer for nobody's safety." More than the same Sir Henry Elliot wrote to his Consul, Sir Philip Francis, advising him to countermand and postpone, *sine die*, the solemn opening of the pretty little new English church at Kadikœui, for which the Fifth had been appointed, lest the ceremony should give offence, and be looked upon as a challenge to the Mussulmans. The Consul wisely observed that such apprehensions were unfounded, that it was too late now to stop proceedings, that there were hardly any Mussulmans living in Kadikœui, and those at Scutari were

not likely to know or hear anything about the intended inauguration, much less to object to it, and finally, that any exhibition of fear could only make matters worse, by suggesting doubts and difficulties about the exercise of a right which had never been disputed.

All was thus arranged for the opening when Sir Henry Elliot, still anxious for the public safety, sent M. Sandisson, his first dragoman, to consult the Minister of the Police, Abdi Pasha, on the possible consequences of the celebration of the harmless ceremony. The Minister answered, as a matter of course, that "he knew of no hostile feeling against the Christians, and especially against the English; but that, nevertheless, in the present mood of the population of the capital, it was perhaps as well to abstain from anything which might be construed into a demonstration." Whereupon Sir Henry Elliot sent a message to Kadikui, that "the Minister of Police forbade the opening of the church."

This merely proves that her Majesty's Ambassador was not at the time as free from uneasiness, or so firm in his resolutions as the Turkophiles described him. He did not refuse to summon the English fleet to Constantinople because he thought its services might not be needed, but simply because he knew that its entrance into the Bosphorus would have been a breach of all existing treaties, and, in the meanwhile, he did all he could do by sending for a second despatch-boat, a little irregularity for which

there were fortunately some precedents. For the rest, the honest truth is, that we were, for the above stated excellent reasons, all of us as much afraid as General Ignatieff was, or "pretended to be," and the only one who gave proof of real stoutness of heart was a woman. the wife of that very Russian Ambassador to whom the "alarm arising from remorse," or the "simulation of it suggested by evil designs," was so glibly imputed. Madame Ignatieff, who had only returned from a short excursion to St. Petersburg on the Monday, was seen on the following day at Stamboul, graciously showing the great interiors of the principal mosques to some of the officers of the Russian corvette which had brought her back from Odessa—a return for the courteous attentions paid to the lovely lady on board during the passage. On her part, and on that of the husband who allowed her thus to expose herself to any possible harm or insult, there might be affectation or exaggeration of courage, but certainly no trace of fear, or pretence of it.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE PASHAS.

LAST DAYS OF ABD-UL-AZIZ.—HIS NEW CABINET.—THE CATASTROPHE.—THE 29TH OF MAY.—SULTAN MURAD'S ACCESSION.—NEW BROOMS ON THE THRONE.—A SULTAN'S PROGRESS.—A SULTAN'S DEATH.

SULTAN ABD-UL-AZIZ KHAN, Refuge of the World and Shadow of God, 32nd Sovereign of the dynasty of Osman, and 29th since the conquest of Constantinople, was not in those sunny May days in the most enviable frame of mind. He kept wandering from palace to palace, from Dolmabacheh to Cheragan, from Cheragan to the Yildiz-Kiosk, and from the Yildiz-Kiosk back again to Dolmabacheh, but neither the number nor the vastness of his Imperial mansions seemed to have room enough for him and for the anxious cares which beset him. He looked down from his window, and behold ! anchored close to the Top-haneh shore, within musket-shot of his august and sacred person, he saw a double row of foreign men-of-war—the *Sokol* of Russia, the *Gladiateur* of France, the *Freundsberg* of Austria, the *Scylla* of Italy, the *Bittern* of England, powerful vessels most

of them, though entering the Straits under the modest designation of *stationnaires*, armed with few, but formidable guns, and manned by crews which could in any emergency land an aggregate force of 1500 men, little heeding the mighty array of his iron-clads, for which he could muster no men, or of his long rows of cannon, for which he knew not how to purchase ammunition. So galling to his Sublime Majesty was the sight of those gunboats, that upon the arrival of the *Sokol*, bearing the hated Russian flag, he was seized, if the report may be credited, with one of his violent paroxysms of fury, which he vented upon his inoffensive window-panes, smashing two of them with his fist. Telegrams reached him from his Ambassador at Berlin, telling him how the High Chancellors of the three Empires were laying their heads together to devise the terms on which he might hope to make peace with his rebel subjects—terms to which his consent was taken for granted, though no one saw by what means they would eventually be enforced on the insurgents. From Stamboul intelligence was conveyed to him of an incessant stir among the *Soltas*, unsatisfied with their first victory, purchasing arms for a renewed strife, plotting new demonstrations, organising new deputations, which were to come to him with fresh demands, urging upon him the dismissal of his lately-appointed Grand Vizier, and the elevation to that office of Midhat Pasha—of that same Midhat of whom he vainly endeavoured to get rid by sending him to

Broussa, whom he, with no better success, tried to satisfy by appointing to a place in the Cabinet as a Minister without portfolio, and who, men expected, was soon to be palmed upon him as Grand Vizier, with his new-fangled constitutional notions of a deliberative Council and a responsible Ministry.

For some intimation of this nature, this Padishah, this King of kings, had to make up his mind, and at no distant period; for, we were told, no later than on the coming Friday, whether or not he ventured upon a public attendance at mosque, the Softas would be sure to find him out, and he could rely neither on his own courage nor on the staunchness of his troops for the means of warding off the unwelcome visit, or of meeting the obnoxious petitions with a resolute denial. No wonder the helpless ruler, the dismayed autocrat, fidgeted about his vast apartments, paced up and down his long corridors like a lion in his cage, worn out with a fury which was as unendurable as he knew it to be impotent.

To flatter himself with the exercise of the mere shadow of sovereign power, or to enjoy the bak-sheesh accruing to him as well as to his minions from every fresh appointment, the Sultan amused himself by shifting his high functionaries from place to place with incessant change, the nominations filling half a column of every number of the daily papers. Ali Pasha, who a fortnight since had been removed from the Governorship of Herzegovina, to be ap-

pointed with the same rank at Scutari, in Albania, was again transferred from Scutari to Mostar: Selim Pasha, who had replaced Ali at Mostar, was recalled to Constantinople as Inspector of Tribunals; Djavid Pasha, who was to be sent out as Vali of Syria, resumed his functions as Minister of Public Instruction, the Decree which a few days since united that department with that of Charitable Institutions being repealed, and the two portfolios again separated. It used to be said that Valis, Pashas, and other officials of high rank, had their home in the saddle, being compelled to ride incessantly from place to place; they might be said at this time to live with a foot in the stirrup, perpetually awaiting the counter-order sure to come before they mounted to obey the order. This game, however, could not be carried on much longer, the general opinion being that the Sultas would not put up any more with the unpopular Sultan, and that many days would not pass ere Murad Effendi was brought to Eyvok Mosque to gird on Osman's sword.

There was, meanwhile, under great appearance of mutual goodwill, no very thorough accord among the members of his Majesty's Council. It was to little purpose that the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Rushdi, had gathered together so many old Ministers in his Cabinet, unless he could find the means of bringing them into something like harmony, unless he could prevent their neutralising and eventually eliminating each other by their dissensions. A few

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should, be broken. He was a Pasha : he conceived that it was for the Pashas to wield the destinies of the State : a State which at all times, and especially in the present circumstances, would task the energies not of priests or students, but of soldiers. It was not known which of these advisers, Hussein Avni, Dervish, or others, honoured the Sultan in his long-cherished design of altering the law of succession by appointing his eldest son, Youssoof Izzedin, to reign after him, to the exclusion of his nephews, the sons of his brother the late Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid ; but it is by no means unlikely that among those who flattered him with promises of their co-operation in this scheme, there were some of those who were at the same time conspiring, and who eventually accomplished his overthrow.

At last the catastrophe was mature, and, long as it had been foreseen, it came upon us with the suddenness of a clap of thunder.

It was in the morning of the 30th of May (the day after the memorable 18th, old style, of my Turkish friend of Boolgoorloo) that we received the news on landing at Karakeni Bridge from the *Therapia* and *Buyukdere* steamer.

We had set out from our summer quarters in a perfect deluge of rain, some of us trying to make out the meaning of the reports of cannon which had been heard from Stamboul, breaking the silence of the dead hours of the night. We stopped at Bebek, where the present as well as the late Grand Vizier

had their *yalis*, or country houses, and were there joined by the Private Secretary of Mehemet Rushdi, who whispered that "a great revolution had been accomplished in the night—that Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz had been deposed, and his nephew, Murad Effendi, eldest son of Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, had been proclaimed." The news as it circulated on board the steamer was variously commented upon, and became the subject of friendly bets, but on the whole obtained little credit. Presently, however, we were told to look out as we approached the Imperial Palaces at Dolmabacheh and Cheragan; and there, sure enough, we saw dimly through the blinding rain all the iron-clads and other vessels riding at anchor *pavoisés* as if for a great festivity. We landed, and as we looked up towards the Tower of the Bourse, we perceived that the funds, which were down at 11 on the previous evening, had now risen to 16.32. As we crossed the bridge, on our way to Galata, we met several squads of the Imperial mounted guard in full uniform and with gold-laced horse-trappings, going up at a brisk gallop to Stamboul. On arriving at the British Consulate we were told that the proclamation of Murad as Sultan had certainly been made in the night, the event being announced by firing 100 cannon; and there were discordant rumours either that Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was dead—in fact, had been killed—or that he had been imprisoned and hidden somewhere, probably on board one of his iron-clads. His life or death however would not in any

manner have affected the success of this astounding revolution, for he had not one friend in the world, and his very eunuchs would not have lifted a finger in his defence. The throne was vacant so far as he was concerned, and the words "The old Sultan is dead; long life to the new Sultan," would have been morally true, even if Abd-ul-Aziz had long survived the terrible events of that night. He was certainly dead as a Sovereign, and the eight or more millions of Turkish line which he was said to have been hoarding for years, were not unlikely to be brought into light for the public good. What made people, at first, incline to believe the intelligence of the death of Abd-ul-Aziz likely to turn out to be correct, was the notion, well or ill founded, that Islamism did not allow of two Khalifs, or successors of the Prophet living at the same time, a maxim which may now be set aside as exploded.

It was understood, as I said, that new demonstrations in favour of Midhat were to be made by the Softas on a preceding Friday, but His Highness had significantly hinted to the ringleaders of these priestlings that their business was to "read the Koran," and his duty to "sweep the streets." The revolution had now passed into the soldiers—into the Pashas'—hands, and it had been accomplished without firing a musket or drawing a sword.

The Sultan, as I had repeatedly telegraphed, (and even on the eve of the event,) had been for a long time in expectation of the fate which

awaited him, and had endeavoured to evade it by perpetually shifting his residence, by avoiding the necessity of appearing before the public on his way to mosque on Fridays, or by putting off his attendance from noon to a later hour, and by hiding as he best could in the most secret apartments of his palace. He had also taken the precaution of shutting up Murad Effendi and all his other nephews, and keeping a close watch upon their movements, though lavishing upon them all demonstrations of honour and affection, possibly with intent to do away with them whenever an occasion to save himself by sacrificing their lives might arise. Fortunately for these Princes, the Sultan had neither guards nor servants on whose fidelity he might rely, and those who laid hold of him were in all probability the same who set his prisoners at liberty.

One of the devices by which the conspirators hoped to rid themselves of the Sultan consisted in enticing him on board one of his ironclads, and steaming away with him to some distant region where efforts would be made to induce him to abdicate by the strong bribe of an annuity of £200,000.

As an explanation of the formalities observed in the Sultan's deposition it was afterwards stated that a private Council was held on Monday, the 29th, attended only by the Grand Vizier, Hussein Avni, and Midhat, and that it was by this triumvirate that the decisive measure was resolved upon. The execution was to take place on the following day,

but at ten o'clock in the night, Hafiz Pasha, the First Chamberlain of the Sultan, received some intimation of the intended *coup d'état*, and upon the Sultan being warned of it, Hussein Avni was summoned to the palace. The Seraskier refused to attend on the plea of illness, but a second summons immediately followed, hinting that the Sultan was aware of the conspiracy, and demanding the War Minister's immediate attendance. In the meanwhile a Council of all the ministers was called together at the Seraskierate, to which were admitted many of the Ulemas, Mollahs, and other Church and State dignitaries. There the Sheik-ul-Islam, as first interpreter of Koran law, gave sentence that the Sultan could be lawfully dethroned, and that Mehemet Murad Effendi, nephew of Sultan Abdul-Aziz, and eldest son of the late Sultan Abdul-Medjid, as the oldest surviving male of the Imperial dynasty, should by right be called to the succession. The acceptance of Murad was said to be certain, and the resolution was approved by the Council without a dissentient voice.

In the meanwhile Redif Pasha, President of the Council of War—the same who now (June 1877), as War Minister, is wielding the destinies of the Ottoman Empire, probably to the utter ruin of its people and sovereign—had been instructed by Hussein Avni to make all the necessary preparations, and had surrounded Dolmabahceh Palace with troops on the land side, and with well-manned steam

launches, or *Mouches*, on the side of the Bosphorus, thus guarding every in and out let of the palace ; while Ahmed Kaissarli, Minister of Marine, had gone on board the admiral's ship *Messoudieh* a lately purchased ironclad, and a new favourite toy of the Sultan, at anchor in front of the Imperial Palace.

These arrangements being made, an invitation was conveyed to Murad, begging him to receive the investiture of the elevated rank to which the vote of the Council had raised him. The Prince, who had been held as hostage or prisoner at the palace by the old Sultan, could not, or would not, at first comply with the request ; but Hussein Avni, at the head of two squadrons of horse, repaired to the palace, and by the aid of some of the servants, succeeded in smuggling away the Prince, and conveyed him to the Seraskierate, where, after receiving the homage of the assembled Council, he was solemnly proclaimed as Sultan Murad V., in the presence of about 500 or 600 persons, Mussulmans and Christians, who had been hastily called together on the spot.

This proclamation was made at break of day ; it was announced to the world by 101 discharges of heavy artillery, and by hoisting the imperial standard on the tower of the Seraskierate and on the old Genoese Tower at Galata. Telegrams were at the same time sent to all the Governors of Provinces, and later to the representatives of the Sublime Porte abroad, conveying tidings of the auspicious event. Notwithstanding the heavy rain and storm,

the multitude began to crowd the grand square before the Seraskierate, to the number, it was said, of 10,000 to 20,000

While this important transaction was being consummated at the Seraskierate, on the other side of the Golden Horn at Dolmabahch, Redif Pasha entered the palace, and asked for admission to Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz—who had taken refuge in the harem—and pressed upon the eunuchs the necessity of his having an interview with the Sultan. Upon the Sultan, under the threat of a violation of the women's sanctuary, making his appearance, the Pasha, who had with him general officers of high rank and a detachment of troops, intimated to him that "it was the will of the nation that he should be deposed, and that he had from that moment ceased to be Sultan," adding that "he should prepare to leave the palace, of which his successor, Sultan Murad, was to take immediate possession." Abd-ul-Aziz broke out into a fit of wild rage, called Redif "a liar," and declared that he disbelieved him, whereupon the Pasha bade the Sultan look out at the windows, and satisfy himself that he was at the discretion of the land and sea forces, which put all ideas of resistance on his part out of the question. The ex-Sultan's fury at once collapsed, and he allowed himself to be escorted by water to Top-Capou, where a temporary residence was made ready for him in the still remaining apartments of the old palace, near the Seraglio Point (Serai Bounou).

An eye-witness, from whom I had these particulars, assured me that the ex-Sultan, on landing, seeing that the soldiers did not give the customary salute by presenting arms, was unable to master his vexation, which he evinced by an angry clutch at his beard. He was presently followed by his family, the Valideh, his mother, his sons, Youssoof Izzedin Effendi and the others, and fifty-three boats full of women, children, nurses, slaves, and other persons of the household. Before quitting the palace, the ex-Sultan, through the agency of his First Chamberlain and Secretary, signified to the Council his "good pleasure to submit to the wishes of the nation, and to grant all desired reforms;" but he was answered that it was "too late."

The palace, being thus vacated by the dethroned Sovereign, was soon afterwards occupied by the new Padishah. Sultan Murad was conveyed from the Seraskierate to the landing-place at Sirkedjee Iskelessi, and there he embarked in the State carque which, attended by a grand retinue, brought him back to the imperial abode from which he had a few hours before come forth a rescued prisoner.

Eighteen months previous to this catastrophe I had chanced to see the accession of King Alfonso XII. to the throne of Spain. I was now present at the elevation of Murad V. as thirty-third Sultan of the dynasty of Osman. What I said on the former occasion it seemed natural for me to repeat on the



present. The new Sovereign appeared, in either case, all that his people could desire, and the Ministers who were instrumental in his rise might be equally said to have a great card in their hands if they only knew how to play it. On the Friday after his elevation the new Sultan showed himself to the whole assembled population of Constantinople, and I can freely testify that the enthusiasm his presence excited was as genuine and unanimous as that which hailed Isabella's son all along his progress from Barcelona and Valencia to Madrid. Indeed, the rejoicing of the masses who crowded the streets of Galata and Stamboul was even more free from alloy than the enthusiasm which met the Spanish monarch at his landing, inasmuch as in Spain some misgiving might arise in consideration of the immature age of the prince; while in Turkey the Sovereign who was the object of so hearty an acclamation came before his people in the very prime of life, and, as it was thought, in full possession of such faculties as Providence had bestowed upon him. In every other respect the successors of Charles V. and of Mohammed II. might equally be said to have inaugurated their reigns by the exhibition of all those benevolent and gracious words and acts which at once revealed them as the men of their age. Both of them were preceded by the announcement of a great retrenchment in their personal expenditure; both were anxious to lay aside that God-like sublimity which raised their predecessors into beings, as it were, of

another sphere, and estranged them from the interests and sympathies of mankind.

The young Spanish Bourbon desired that the old form of *tutoiement* which court etiquette had maintained in Castile from the first to the second Isabella, should be discontinued, himself giving the example of that mode of address which common courtesy had introduced among his subjects, and the new successor of Osman made his first appearance dressed in a plain military uniform, in a plain fez without his aigrette of diamonds, without decorations, with none of the ornaments distinctive of his rank, and he moved through the throng, not in the erect and statue-like stiffness of a Padishah of former times, too high and mighty to seem aware of the plaudits which greeted him, but bowed to right and left in acknowledgment of his people's salutations, bowed down to the mane of his white steed, then raised his face radiant with a happiness which he was at no pains to conceal, and which he saw reflected in the countenances of the myriads of the delighted multitude. It was to all outward seeming the accession of a European monarch that these Orientals welcomed, and this conceit was confirmed by the order which was published on the eve, that persons admitted to the imperial presence should no longer, as was the custom, accost the Sovereign with their arms folded on their bosoms and their faces bowed to the ground, as if awed and dazzled by the superhuman light of a god's face, but that they should henceforth

stand up to their natural height, and speak as man to man, face to face, the Sultan valuing his subjects' true love and reverence and dispensing with their abject, servile prostration. At Constantinople, as well as at Madiid, the era of the Citizen-Kings seemed to be ushered in.

The stormy rain and wind, in the midst of which the overthrow of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was accomplished, during the night of Monday to Tuesday, and which, we were told, was considered auspicious by the Turks, was succeeded by calm and genial summer weather as the sun announced the Mohammedan Sabbath-day. Friday (June 2nd) was in this instance a holiday for men of all creeds, and the business of the whole population of the Bosphorus was to crowd upon the line of thoroughfares along which Sultan Murad had to pass on his way to attend divine service at the mosque. The Sultan left the Palace of Dolmabahceh at half-past eleven, in a state-carriage drawn by four English horses. He was driven along the main street of Galata to the Karakeui Bridge, across the Golden Horn, and through the quarter of the old Seraglio to the Palace of Top-Capou, and alighted at the sanctuary where the Hirkai Sheriff, or mantle of the Prophet, is preserved. There he was received by the Grand-Vizier, the Sheik-ul-Islam, and a host of Church and State dignitaries; and hence, mounted on a magnificent white palfrey, he proceeded to the great Mosque of St. Sophia. The Imam there prayed God for "long

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looked younger than he really was. He was not uneducated, spoke French, and was supposed to have inherited some of the feebleness, with much of the uprightness and gentleness, of his father's character. The crowd, however, saw nothing but perfection in its idol of the moment; and what a crowd it was! The squalid rabble from Greek, Jew, and Moslem quarters, the throng of carriages with Pashas' wives and Ambassadors' ladies; the colours of gaudily-dressed veiled women clustering like bees at every window or balcony; the Mollahs, the dervishes, the Greek priests, and Latin monks elbowing their way through the hamals, water-carriers, vendors of cake, cocoa-nuts, and lemonade, and all the hurly-burly of the Galata Bourse, the bazaar entrance and the landing-stairs put together—all the noise and bustle of three great towns and a hundred villages blended in one swarming mass. A man's head would whirl with the hubbub, and his bones ache with the crush for many a day after the festivity.

With this "his first appearance on the imperial stage," the new Sovereign had played his part, and by his *Hatt*, or message, he assigned to his Ministers the task that devolved upon them. They had in him the very king that might best suit a true statesman's purpose—one who would do no wrong, and wished that right should be done in his name. The Sultan desired his Ministers to impart to all his subjects, without distinction or exception, the blessings of a "full and entire liberty." He directed them to re-

form the institutions of the country "on a sure and permanent basis." Of the goodwill of the new Sovereign, so far as one could make out of words put into his mouth by his advisers, there could be no doubt. His power to carry his benevolent intentions into effect was only too soon tested by the dolorous suite.

Not many people on that joyous day gave a thought to the lone man, now a captive at Top-Capou, who fifteen years before had also had his glorious entrance, and so recently his ignominious exit; the man whose firmness and energy had once inspired hopes as sanguine as any that were now built on another man's meekness and docility. People knew that Abd-ul-Aziz was living; they wondered what was left for him to wish to live for; they wondered how long others would think life good for him. Barely twice twenty-four hours elapsed, and these speculations were set at rest in as prompt, but not quite in as criminal a manner as men were disposed to anticipate. Abd-ul-Aziz had ceased to exist, but had died by his own hand.

In the afternoon of Sunday, June 4th, a secretary of the Grand Vizier came up from Constantinople in a steam launch, and stopped at every Embassy and Legation, officially communicating this tremendous intelligence. Of course the news was imparted somewhat hurriedly and in a few words, and the particulars were left to the fertility of the inventive faculties of the public. "The old Sultan," it was said, "has

cut his throat with a razor; he has cut it with a pair of long Persian scissors; he has severed his carotid artery with a dagger. No, he has plunged the dagger into his heart." Then, again, of course no one would believe in the suicide. "Abd-ul-Aziz," it was suggested, "was never the man to commit such an act. He was too great a coward to find courage even in despair. It was an evident case of murder. If the ex-Sultan's throat was cut, somebody had cut it for him. Domestic murder has at all times been the order of the day in these Eastern communities. The bowstring, the dagger, or the poisoned cup of coffee has invariably been resorted to, to rid the head of the Ottoman dynasty of all the members of his family who could cause him uneasiness. It is old Turkey all over again; only in the present case the murder has been committed with indecent hurry, and the fable of the suicide is too clumsy to deceive even the most credulous minds."

Towards evening, however, all these reports grounded on the known indifference of the Turks to human life were overcome, and the particulars of what seems to have been the real nature of the tragedy were made known. Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz appeared to have been so utterly crushed and humbled by the sense of his misfortunes as not to have recoiled from a direct communication with the fortunate relative for whose advancement he had been dethroned. On the day after his deposition (Wednesday), he had written to his nephew, congratulating

him on his promotion, assuring him of his best wishes, and at the same time asking, as a favour, to be removed from Top-Capou in the old Seraglio, where he was first lodged, and conveyed to one of the pavilions of the Palace of Cheragan, which he had himself built, and to the very pavilion which he had destined as a residence for his nephew, Murad Effendi, now Sultan Murad. This latter immediately granted his uncle's request, and the ex-Sultan and his family were taken in boats across the Golden Horn to Cheragan that very evening of Wednesday. Subsequently, we were informed, Abd-ul-Aziz again asked to be transferred across the Bosphorus to the fair palace of Beylerbey, on the Asiatic side, the very palace in which the Sultan himself lodged his distinguished visitor the Empress Eugenie, at the time of her Eastern tour at the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This new request was also favourably entertained, but the ex-Sultan did not profit by this fresh evidence of his nephew's liberality. Already throughout Thursday and Friday he had, it is said, given proofs of mental alienation, and on Friday, at the time of the new Sultan's progress to Stamboul, he had addressed some of the crew of an ironclad anchored close to the palace, asking them why they did not fire on the sacrilegious usurper? He was seen walking restlessly up and down his apartment, took little or no food for two days, and seemed plunged into such depths of savage melancholy, that—as on Saturday



he had aimed his revolver at one of the officers on duty at his door—the people of his household deemed it expedient to remove all weapons beyond his reach. On Sunday morning at an early hour he parted with his women at the harem and shut himself up all alone in his apartment, locking and bolting the two doors which separate the *harem* from the *schemlick*, the women from the men's apartment. All was silence till about 10 a.m., when the women, who could watch their lord from their windows at his toilet, saw him fall on a sofa; and raising an alarm, succeeded, with the aid of the persons summoned by their cries, in breaking open the doors, when the Sultan was found lying half across the sofa, with his feet on the floor, in a great pool of blood, with all the appearance of recent death. He had, it seems, obtained possession of a small but sharp-pointed pair of embroidery scissors, borrowing them from the Valideh, his mother, for the avowed purpose of trimming his moustaches; he had with it very diligently cut off his beard close to the skin, leaving only the thick moustache on the upper lip—probably to disarm any suspicion of those who were watching the operation from the harem windows, or possibly to express by that outward sign the sense of his degradation and deposition—and had then deliberately gone to work, endeavouring to cut the veins of both his arms at the elbow, jobbing in the scissors with great determination, till he succeeded in severing the ulnar artery of the left arm, inflicting a

wound or cut which must have put an end to his life in ten or fifteen minutes. He then allowed himself to bleed to death like an old Roman hero, till he sank exhausted in the posture in which he was found. His face and body were utterly bloodless, his skin white and scrupulously clean, and no bruise or swelling, no trace of a struggle or violence, could anywhere be discovered. At the express request of the Government, a professional examination of the body was made one hour later in a guard-room on the ground-floor, where it had been removed, attended by native and foreign doctors, nineteen in number, among whom were Dr. Dickson, the physician attached to her Majesty's Embassy, and other European surgeons and general practitioners, either belonging to the European Embassies or Legations, or residents in Péra or Galata; and these gentlemen delivered a certificate, which was printed, signed by all of them, to the effect that the ex-Sultan had died of wounds or cuts which he alone and no other person could possibly have inflicted. Dr. Dickson went out that same morning to Therapia, on a visit to Sir Henry Elliot, and gave the Ambassador a minute account of the circumstances on which the unanimous opinion of himself and his colleagues was founded.

The verdict, therefore, was "*Felo de se*," which did not prevent the burial of the body with solemn pomp at Mahmoud I.'s monument at Stamboul later in the afternoon. I scarcely need advert to

the fact that this was the first instance of a Sultan putting an end to his days, as suicide is by no means prevalent among the fatalist Osmanlis. Many, however, are the Sultans who have met with a violent death; three of them were strangled, and others despatched with dagger or poison. Some others have also been deposed or compelled to resign.

Abd-ul-Aziz thus withdrew from all competition to the throne he had forfeited, and went to give in another world his account of the manner in which he had occupied it for nearly fifteen years (June 25, 1861, to May 29, 1876). The Sultan's end was clearly a case in which it is difficult to apply the *eni prodest* rule of evidence. The new Sultan and his Government did certainly benefit from a death in which they apparently had no hand. Abd-ul-Aziz could give them no trouble, nor ought any uneasiness to have arisen on the score of the ex-Sultan's son, Youssoof Izzedin Effendi, as, independently of his well-deserved unpopularity, that prince could only have been lawfully called to the throne after the death of Sultan Murad and of Murad's brothers, six in number.

Part of the ex-Sultan's stud of horses were soon being sold by auction. It might have been equally easy to dispose of his female establishment, amounting, it was said, to 1500 persons, between what people improperly called "wives"—for a Sultan never marries—and nurses, slaves, singing and dancing girls, and other attendants. As I was walking on

the following day in the neighbourhood of Beikos, cross the Bosphorus, on the Asiatic shore, on the road from the kiosk or palace of Tokat, I met two 'arabas,' or country carts, drawn by oxen, and laden with women of various ranks with children and nurses and negro attendants. My surmise was that these were some of the inmates of the ex-Sultan's harem, for whom a temporary home was provided in the vacant apartments of Tokat till the new Sovereign or his Ministers had time to consider what permanent arrangement could be made for them, in which case other flocks of the same birds could find their nest in some of the many other imperial country homes. Many of the former women of Abd-ul-Medjid, and even some of those of Mahmoud II., who died in 1839, are still enjoying the pension allowed them by the civil list. A widow or cast-off woman of a Sultan has a high value in the matrimonial market among these loyal Turks; those who have borne children to the Sultan are, however, debarred from marriage.

It was reckoned that of £T.200,000,000 constituting the debt of the Ottoman Empire, a sum of £T.53,000,000 had been absorbed by Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz during the fifteen years of his reign. But on the subject of his covetousness and rapacity, great as those faults were, as well as with respect to the wealth he had accumulated at his death, there had apparently been gross exaggeration.

Although there never dwelt in my mind the

slightest doubt that Abdul-ul-Aziz died by his own hand, I must confess that there were many persons, if not at Therapia, certainly at Beyukdere, who insisted that he had fallen a victim to the jealous apprehensions of those who had deposed him. Their theory was that, being alone in his apartment, and having gone through his toilet, the ex-Sultan was overpowered with sleep, naturally brought about by the restless night he had passed, and in this helpless state was fallen upon by assassins, who after rendering him insensible with chloroform or some other powerful narcotic, and having him thus at their discretion, inflicted with the scissors which they found on his table those cuts at his arms which ended his life, taking care that they should have the appearance of being done by his own hand. The suspicions of the partisans of this hypothesis rest chiefly on the promptness with which so many doctors were summoned to the spot, within less than an hour after his death, and on the haste with which the Minister of War, Hussein Avni Pasha, the presumed chief actor in the drama, made his appearance in the death-chamber.

My objections to this version of the event are—first, that it would evince too great a refinement of cunning and foresight on the part of the assassins; second, the positive fact that the ex-Sultan himself, on that very morning, being deprived of all weapons, borrowed the scissors from the Valideh, his mother, pretending that he wanted to use them to trim his beard—a cir-

cumstance with which his murderers could hardly be acquainted. The theory would imply complicity on the part of the mother—a supposition unnatural in itself and contradicted by the agony the old lady evinced, accusing herself of being the cause of her son's death by the fatal loan of the instrument of his destruction. The report that she also, in her despair, had put an end to her life, was soon contradicted; but she did not for a long time recover from a distraction which could not be simulated, even if she had had any object in conspiring with her enemies against her son's life.

The downfall and death of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, which was the work of a few plotting Pashas, was for a considerable time alluded to as “the glorious revolution, the free and unanimous act of the Ottoman nation.”\*

\* As a specimen of a Turkish syllogism in which the *major* proposition is not proved, and the *minor* is omitted, I subjoin the *fatwa*, or sentence pronounced by the Sheik-ul-Islam on Monday night, May 29th, when the deposition of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was proposed in full Council:

“Question.—Can the man who happens to be the Prince of Believers be deposed, when, without possessing any knowledge of political affairs, he has lost the use of his intellectual faculties; when he squanders the money of the State according to his caprice, so that the State and the people cannot bear the burden of his outlay; when he unsettles civil and religious affairs, ruins the State and the people, and when, in short, a continuance of this state of things becomes dangerous to the State and the people?

“Answer.—Yes.

“Written by the humble

(Signed)

“HASSAN HAIRCULLAH,

“Whom may God forgive.”

## CHAPTER V.

## THE DOCTORS.

REIGN OF MURAD V.—A CEREMONY DEFERRED.—RUMOURS OF  
THE SULTAN'S ILLNESS.—THE SLAUGHTER OF THE MINISTERS.  
—DE LUNATIC CONSULTATIONS.—DEPOSITION OF MURAD  
SULTAN ABD-UL-HAMID.—THE CEREMONY PERFORMED.

THE reign of Sultan Murad V. was destined to be short, and could not be expected to be happy. On the 2nd of June it had been announced that the new Padishah was, according to usage, to proceed to Eyooob's mosque, where the ceremony of girding him with Osman's sword, the form of investiture of the Ottoman sovereigns, was to take place. It was postponed for that day, put off from week to week, and finally adjourned *sin die*. Many reasons were mentioned to account for the delay, but, among others, the sad one that the Sultan was slightly indisposed—afflicted, it was said, by a boil on his left shoulder, the same complaint, it may be remembered, that disabled his predecessor on a memorable occasion, and the same, as we shall see, from which his successor has also been repeatedly suffering. Later in the same month matters looked more serious.

The Sultan's boils assumed the character of carbuncles, and one of them was, on the 21st, cut open by his head physician and surgeon, Dr. Capoleone, an Italian.

The real complaint of the Sultan however it began to be whispered, arose from his sense of the difficulties and dangers with which his path was beset, and before which he was described as ready to faint, and to abdicate his throne in favour of his brother. The task imposed upon him was above almost any man's strength, and Murad had inherited from his father a weak constitution, which the indulgences of early life had further enfeebled. There was the financial blind alley out of which no issue was apparent; there was diplomacy with her notes and memorandums; there were terrible reports of the still open civil war in Herzegovina, of the bloody deeds in Bulgaria, of hostile intentions on the part of Servia and Montenegro; there were endless warnings, remonstrances, upbraidings, and even threats on the part of foreign Powers, and especially of Russia.

Still all these were external troubles, and it was the duty of the Sultan's Ministers to take the brunt of adverse circumstances upon themselves, and to smooth the path along which they undertook to coach their master. The real disease of poor Murad was in himself; and it revealed itself in fits of sadness, in vague and gloomy apprehensions of personal danger, in a melancholy madness, to say it in one



word, which was in the blood, hereditary, as it seems, in the later generations of the House of Osman; which might have been liable to develop itself and suddenly break out without apparent causes, but which in the case of Murad could be traced to only too clear and obvious sources. Murad had had his heart and soul almost crushed out of him by ill-treatment during the late years of his jealous uncle's reign. He had been held as a prisoner in his apartments at Cheragan Palace, and lived under constant fears for his life, either from violence or treachery, as he well knew that his death and that of his brothers would have paved the way for the fulfilment of the Sultan's desires, enabling him to insure the eventual promotion of his son Yousseof Izzedin to the throne, without resorting to the desperate measure of violating the regular order of succession. It was in the midst of these sinister forebodings that Hussein Avni found Murad, when he came to him at a late hour, on that eventful night of the 29th of May, which transferred him from a prison in Cheragan to a throne at Dolmabahceh. Hussein Avni had walked hastily into the Prince's room, revolver in hand, and had even held out that weapon to Murad, tendering it to him that he might use it in his defence on any emergency. But Murad mistook the Pasha's motive, and thought for a moment that that loaded pistol was levelled at him with murderous intent, and his fears were hardly allayed when presently a new shock to his nerves

## THE DOCTORS.

was given by one of the sentries at the landing-place at Stamboul, who, seeing Hussein Avni and his party approach in a caïque, on what he fancied might be an unlawful errand, pointed his bayonet at the Prince's breast and prepared to give the alarm.

The new Sultan had scarcely recovered from the effects of the encounters of that awful night, when he received, from his deposed predecessor, letters in which entreaties were mixed with reproaches, and even with some hints that he should take warning from his uncle's fate, whose fall was determined by the men whom that uncle had most largely favoured, and on whom he had most firmly relied. There came then his uncle's violent death, to fill him with vague and hardly rational remorse; and, before two weeks were over (June 16th), that tragedy of Taouchan Tach, the particulars of which it was impossible to withhold from him, and impossible also to communicate to him without altogether upsetting a mind which was already tottering on its seat.

I allude to the slaughter of the ministers by Hassan the Circassian.

This Cherkess Hassan, or Hassan the Circassian, a man whom men in Pera designated as the "Oriental Troppmann," was born in the district of Silivria, in a farm called Yapagchee Chiflik, where his father, a late Circassian chief named Ismail Bey, had established himself, probably at some period in the recent Caucasian migration. Hassan was brought

up in the military school at Pancaldi, and had come out with the rank of lieutenant about three years before. He was subsequently implicated in some disturbances which occurred soon afterwards at Ismid, owing to the misconduct of some of his wild countrymen, whole colonies of whom the Government had scattered here and there throughout the empire, to the grave inconvenience of its otherwise peaceful districts. Hassan was arrested at that juncture and sent to Constantinople, where he was shut up in a military dungeon for one month. He more lately took an active part in another Circassian riot at Rodosto, but apparently escaped in this second instance without punishment. He had powerful friends at the palace, being either a brother or a near relative of one of the favourites, and, indeed, of the third so-called "wife" of the late Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz and mother of one of his children--the very woman, it appears, who, from her harem window, saw the Sultan fall exhausted by loss of blood when he put an end to his life on the 4th of that month, and who herself died, possibly of grief at her bereavement, on the Sunday after. Hassan, a young man of twenty-five, was renowned for his proficiency in the use of all weapons, a dead shot, a master of fence, and so sure a rider that he would undertake for a bet to shoot a number of eggs as he rode his horse at them full speed. He was of a slender but wiry frame, exceedingly strong, with a red beard, and had the fine regular features peculiar to his handsome

race. Those who saw him after the event fancied they detected a sinister and truculent expression in his countenance. His disposition is said to have been from early youth exceedingly turbulent and profligate. Thanks to the favour of his kinswoman, Hassan rose to the rank of a captain and adjutant, and was attached in the capacity of aide-de-camp to the person of Youssoof Izzedin Effendi, the eldest son of the late Sultan, who was in command of the Imperial Guard. After the deposition of Abd-ul-Aziz, the War Minister, Hussein Avni Pasha, who wished to remove from the capital all persons suspected of too strong an attachment to the old Court, ordered Hassan to join his Army Corps at Bagdad. As Hassan, notwithstanding his promotion to the rank of major, with which the banishment was accompanied, disregarded the order, and allowed himself violent and seditious language, he was arrested on Thursday the 16th, but released in the evening, having pledged his word that he would proceed to his destination on the following morning, and only wanted freedom to make his preparations for the journey. Tair, or Tiyar Pasha, a Circassian General, offered himself as security for the fulfilment of his young countryman's engagement, and he was afterwards imprisoned for suspected complicity.

Upon obtaining his freedom, Hassan, on the same evening, crossed the Bosphorus, and went over to Hussein Avni's residence at Pasha Liman, near Scutari. There he was told that the Minister of

War was not at home, but would probably be at that moment attending a council at Midhat Pasha's house, in the quarter of Taouchan Tach, in Stamboul. Thither, therefore, Hassan repaired, arriving at Midhat's *londak* at about ten p.m. The Council was then sitting, attended by the Grand Vizier, the War Minister, the Minister of Marine, and High Admiral, Ahmed Kaissarli; Midhat Pasha, President of the Council; Raschid Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Halet Pasha, Minister without portfolio; according to some accounts, three other Ministers were present. Hassan wore his uniform, and had on his military cloak, under which he concealed two revolvers, six-shooters—some say four revolvers—besides a yataghan and a kanna, or Circassian knife. The Ministers sat on the upper floor; on the ground-floor were their men in attendance—a numerous company. Hassan, on being told that he could not at once see Hussein Avni, sat down with these people, chatted with them, took coffee, and waited. Having thus disarmed suspicion he, towards midnight, stole out of the ante-chamber, walked upstairs to the Council Room, and found there, on duty at the door, Selim Agha, the *homme de confiance* of Midhat Pasha—by whom again he was told he could not see Hussein Avni. But as Hassan pleaded urgent business, Selim volunteered to go downstairs and consult Hussein Avni's aide-de-camp. He went accordingly, but he had scarcely turned his back, when Hassan immediately opened

the door and found himself in the presence of the Council.

The Council Chamber, Midhat's best room on the upper floor, was a large hall with a bay window and balcony at one end, enjoying an extensive view over the Sea of Marmora, and at the opposite end a door leading to the inner apartments. On both sides of this door were two divans, on which the Ministers sat, Hussein Avni and Raschid Pasha on the side facing the lateral door leading to the staircase, and on the other side, the Grand Vizier and Halet Pasha ; Said Effendi, the Musteshar or Under Secretary of the Grand Vizier, and Mahmoud Bey, Grand Referendaire of the Council, sat apart on another divan. Midhat Pasha had then got up, and stood before them dictating a telegram to them. Hassan, as he entered the lateral door, found himself face to face with Hussein Avni and Raschid Pasha, and, stepping up to the former, revolver in hand, cried out, "Dayran ma, Seraskier !" ("Do not stir, War Minister !") He fired, and Hussein fell, badly wounded, but not dead, vainly attempting to draw a revolver he had in his pocket. Terror seemed to seize the other Ministers. Midhat Pasha at once made for the bottom door, rushed through it to the inner apartments, and was followed by all his colleagues with the exception of Raschid Pasha, who remained as if spell-bound and nailed to his seat, while the Minister of Marine, Ahmed Kaissarli, who alone showed some presence of mind, immediately

closed with the assassin, seized him from behind round the waist and pinioned down both his arms. Hassan, however, by a strenuous exertion, succeeded in disengaging his right hand, and with his Circassian knife inflicted several wounds on Kâisserli, who at last released him, and joined the other Ministers in their flight. In the meantime, Hussein Avni, who was not dead, had risen and was crawling with great difficulty towards the entrance door. Thereupon, Hassan, leaving the Marine Minister, whom he would otherwise have killed, and rushing upon Hussein Avni, overtook him, and hacked at him with his knife, cutting his throat, and never leaving him till he lay motionless at his feet. He turned then, and perceiving Raschid Pasha, who had never stirred, and alone remained in the room, seated on the divan—in the opinion of some persons, already dead with fright—he pointed his revolver at him, exclaiming, “Do you stop here to arrest me?” and shot him through the head. The assassin then went up to the bottom door, which the fugitives had fastened and barricaded from the inside, and, shaking it lustily, he cried, “Grand Vizier, open the door: no harm to you is intended;” and called out that the Minister of Marine should be delivered up to him. The old Grand Vizier, greatly terrified, cried out, it is said, from behind the closed door, “My son, not now; you are too much excited to listen to reason.” Hassan, baffled, in his rage sent two pistol-shots through the door, fortunately without results. Un-

able to force open the door, the assassin upset the furniture, set fire to the curtains, and broke the lustre or chandelier, so that the large room was only lighted by one single taper.

Several minutes elapsed during this horrid butchery, the people in the ante-chamber below stairs, though they heard the report of the fire-arms, not daring to stir, as they apprehended that the murderer was only the instrument of a conspiracy in which some of the persons present might be implicated, and for some time looked at each other with blank amazement, every man suspecting and fearing his neighbour. At length Midhat Pasha having armed himself with a revolver, went downstairs, and raised the spirits of those persons, two of whom, one his own servant, Ahmed Agha, the other Hussein Avni's aide-de-camp, Chukri Bey, ventured into the slaughter-room. As these two men entered the apartment both fell, struck by Hassan's unerring revolver. But by this time the police and soldiery from the nearest post arrived on the spot, and Hassan, after killing a police officer, and wounding several zaptiehs and soldiers, was overpowered and secured, being himself seriously wounded. The soldiers would have killed him on the spot had not Midhat Pasha, through his son-in-law, Refik Bey, bidden them take him alive. The whole affray lasted from twenty minutes to half an hour—some say three-quarters of an hour.

The assassin was taken to the Seraskierate, or



War Office, where, on the following morning, Friday, he was examined, tried, and sentenced to death. On Saturday, at daybreak, 4 a.m., he was hanged on a tree in the open space at the Seraskierate, Turkish ladies of rank going to see the sight. He did not allow the surgeons to bind up his wounds, and was exhausted by loss of blood before he reached the place of execution. The body was left hanging for the whole of that day. Of his victims, Hussein Avni was about sixty years old; Raschid Pasha, about forty-eight.

The object of the Circassian was evidently, at first, merely to kill Hussein Avni, and the subsequent murders were the result of that mad rage which seems to blind a wild beast when it has once tasted blood. Besides Hussein, he only showed inveterate hatred to the Minister of Marine, because he had dared to attempt to stay his hand. The others were killed or wounded in self-defence when the murderer thought that nothing was left to him but to sell his life at the highest price. He avowed at his trial that all he wished was to avenge upon the War Minister, not only his own grievances but also those of many of his brother officers. It is, however, extremely probable that he hated Hussein Avni, as the chief actor in that palace revolution which had hurled the late Sultan from his throne, caused his sister's death, and deprived him (Hassan) of that courtly interest on which he relied for a brilliant success and rapid advancement in his career. The Government naturally were at great pains to

describe the crime of Hassan as an isolated deed of a half-drunken maniac, unconnected with political motives ; and they did not even allow a telegram to pass without striking out the circumstance which was mentioned in it that Hassan was "an ex-aide-de-camp of Youssooff Izzedin Effendi, the late Sultan's eldest son," though the statement was perfectly correct, and, in itself, apparently immaterial. There was reason to believe, nevertheless, that the Ministers were not quite easy on the score of some possible accomplices of the assassin, as on the Friday, the Sultan, "grieved at the tragic occurrence," did not leave the palace, and there was no Selamlık, or reception, as is usually held upon the Sultan's attendance at the mosque. That something like an "Old Turkey" party might still be in existence, and have supporters of Hassan's own desperate temper among the friends and domestics of the late Sultan's household, it was reasonable to suppose ; and that came opportunely to explain why the ceremony of the investiture or consecration at Eyoob's mosque was so long, and, as it seemed, unaccountably adjourned.

The Government organs took great trouble to prove that the sole motive which impelled Hassan to his awful butchery was a vindictive feeling against Hussein Avni, who had on one occasion called him *chapkin*, or *polisson*. Several of the aides-de-camp of the late Sultan, mostly Circassians, were, however, arrested, and all the others were sent to the

different Army Corps in distant regions. Some of those who were arrested had been seen in incessant communication with Hassan throughout the Thursday.

It took some time before the surviving Ministers recovered sufficient equanimity to attend even to the most urgent State affairs. As to the Sultan, such senses as he had not lost before collapsed utterly, and the Ministers were henceforth at infinite pains to keep up the delusion that some one was still at the head of the State, knowing all the time that their Sovereign was a myth and a phantom, a wreck and a ruin. The sorrowful comedy was kept up for nearly three months.

Already about the middle of July it was known that "the continued indisposition of Sultan Murad was causing the most serious uneasiness to his Ministers." He had been to a great extent relieved of his physical sufferings, but sank deeper and deeper into a settled melancholy madness. He listened for hours to the Grand Vizier and Ministers when they came to transact business with him, but seemed unable to understand what was said to him, and his answer at the end of all their speeches invariably was, "Take me out of this cruel position, I cannot bear it." All the decrees published in his name were drawn up without his expressed consent, and without any consciousness on his part. The Ministers would gladly have proposed the Sultan's abdication, and he would have been only

too happy to retire into private life ; but the immediate heir, Ab-dul-Hamid, and his younger brothers were at first equally disinclined to take upon themselves the burden of the imperial dignity. In those circumstances the Ottoman Empire was, and continued to be, without a real responsible Sovereign at its head.

Early in August, a sight from which some people endeavoured to draw consolation attracted our attention as we looked down on the Bosphorus from our balcony at Therapia. The steam yacht, *Pertevis Piale*, visited the shores of the Upper Bosphorus. She was the favourite water conveyance of the Sultan, and, as she displayed the crimson flag with the Star and Crescent at her mainmast, it was understood that she had his Imperial Majesty Murad V. on board. She breasted the fresh north breeze past Therapia and Buyukdere, and threaded the points through which we obtained a view of the Black Sea, passing both the "cavaks," or castles, and the "fanars," or beacons, at the outlet of the Strait. "The Sultan, then," people said, "is in better health, thanks to Dr. Mongeri, the director of the Scutari Lunatic Asylum, who recommended air and exercise." The Padishah had in fact been waked out of his gloomy condition, and was said to have benefited by the exertion. His depression of spirits, or, in other words, madness, was however considered incurable, and rendered him totally unfit for the transaction even of such business as must

necessarily devolve on the head of the State. It was scarcely any longer possible to keep up appearances, and the resolution to depose him, towards which his Ministers had for some time been inclined, could not be long postponed. One of the Pashas, who had been appointed to go out as Caimakan to Ismid, refused, saying that his nomination without the knowledge and express sanction of the Sovereign would be illegal, and such sanction under present circumstances could not be forthcoming. So far as

any act or deed could be considered as such, the throne might be considered vacant.

As a last endeavour to put off the evil day the Government tempted by large fees Dr. Leidesdorf, a physician renowned for his treatment of nervous complaints, and director of a flourishing lunatic asylum near Vienna, to travel to Constantinople and see the imperial patient. The doctor was kept about a fortnight almost as a prisoner at the palace, and the bulletins which were published in his name, though sufficiently ominous, were somewhat reassuring; but in a private conversation he had with Count Zichy, the Austrian Ambassador, he pronounced the Sultan's malady incurable, and announced that he, the doctor, would leave Constantinople forthwith. In this declaration the Vienna doctor went apparently somewhat further than the ordinary attendants on his Majesty had hitherto ventured; inasmuch as Dr. Mongeri thought that long repose, change of place, and a total removal

in the associations of the late anxious period, fit, and almost certainly would, effect a cure, though, in the doctor's opinion, the Sultan would always be liable to a relapse. Dr. Mongeri said that he saw in Murad's illness all the symptoms which were observed in the mental affliction of the Empress Charlotte, with this difference however that besides the deep-set melancholy, the consciousness of imaginary guilt, the haunting terrors, and the suicidal tendencies, which characterised the illness of the Belgian princess, the Padishah was subject to fits of violent excitement, in one of which he was with difficulty prevented from throttling one of his chamberlains.

There is even now, July, 1877, a large party in Turkey who think that the desperate nature of Murad's mental disease was exaggerated at the time of his deposition, and that he has since partially, and even, some contend, completely recovered.

The matter was settled at the time however, and on the 31st of August, at noon, the cannon thundered, announcing that the eldest son of Abd-ul-Medjid, Sultan Murad V., had ceased to reign, and his brother Abd-ul-Hamid, thirty-four years old, had been called to the succession. It was not an unexpected, and not an auspicious event. A second palace revolution was accomplished three months and one day after the consummation of the first. On the 30th of May the Government of the Sublime Porte—i.e. the Grand Vizier and some of the Minis-

ters—settled it to their own satisfaction that Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was a tyrant, and as such was considered and pronounced by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, or High Priest of the Mohammedan faith, unfit to reign. On that day three months the same Grand Vizier and a few of his colleagues became convinced that Sultan Murad was demented, and, upon their representation, the same Sheikh Hassan Hamoullah Effendi, decided that it was lawful to depose him.

- No doubt, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire and their  
would be ~~megas~~

Head of the Mohammedan Church had, in both instances, arrived at the right conclusion about the badness of one Sovereign and the madness of the other; but one shudders at the responsibility a few statesmen and a priest are allowed to take upon themselves, especially if it is stated, as it was in the case of the Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, that the Sovereign was removed by the will of the people. The people merely sanctioned such proceedings by their acquiescence. For the rest, the change of the person of their ruler was not only unforeseen, but in sharp contradiction to the expectations which had been by a variety of deceptive contrivances kept alive among them. No later than the previous Friday that pitiful farce of parading the crazed Sultan Murad to the Selamlık at the mosque had been rehearsed before the multitude. The next Friday the new Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid rode in state to the mosque of St. Sophia, and no one attempted to explain or inquire what had been done with or what would become of

his predecessor. I asked a good Turk of the old school, "What would happen were the Sultan Murad, just deposed, to recover the use of his mental faculties, especially if his brother, from whatever reason, failed to win the goodwill of his people?" "The people's goodwill," was the answer, "has nothing to do with these matters; but you may be sure that the Sultan will never recover, shall never recover." Such is the way the subjects of the Porte receive nowadays the intelligence of ordinary or extraordinary events. King-makers may set up or pull down a Padishah any day in the month or week. "Allah akhbar!" ("God is Great") the pious Mussulman mutters with as little emotion as the Italians of other ages used to say, "Morto un Papa, se ne fa un altro."

The ceremony by which the new Sultan was inaugurated was of the simplest, and was, indeed, mainly a repetition of what has been described in the foregoing chapter. On the 31st of August, between nine and ten in the morning, Abd-ul-Hamid Effendi left the imperial residence at Dolmabahch, and proceeded across Pera and Galata and over the Karakewi Bridge to the kiosque or palace of Top Kapou, in the Old Seraglio at Stamboul. He was accompanied by Redif Pasha, the acting Minister of War, and was driven in a close carriage, escorted by a squadron of mounted gendarmes. In the grounds of the Seraglio there were two battalions and two squadrons, the only troops under arms. Previous to the arrival of



the new Sultan, the Grand Vizier Mehmed Rashedi had assembled a council at Topkapı, and had called all the Ministers by the *Shahkadeh* (the Sultan's name), the Ulemas, and other Council and State officers. There the Grand Vizier explained the situation of Murad V., whose accession to the throne had been mildness of his temper had been the cause of his people as the happiest ever known. On the next day after his elevation he had suffered from a mental infirmity which had rendered him incapable of attending to the duties of State, and he had endeavored to restore his health by going to the country. His resolution had been to continue his journey to the next heir to the Sultan, Abdolhamid II., but he had Effend. He was told that Abdolhamid II. was at the Sultan when he was deposed.

After the Grand Vizier had explained the situation, Emin, a kind of minister of the interior, read the *fatwa* or sentence of the Council. Murad V. was deposed as unfit to reign on account of his mental alienation, and Abdolhamid II. was not be reinstated even in the event of his recovery, as it was impossible to guard against a future relapse. The new Sultan was then taken to the Council-room, where he received the homage of all present, and repaired with them to the sanctuary of the Seraglio, where the Hirkas Sheriff, or mantle of the Prophet Mohammed, is deposited. A prayer was offered up by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and the Bi

An Act of Recognition of the new Padishah, was read. The Sultan then appeared on the platform of *Orta Kapou*, and seated himself on the golden throne, surrounded by the *Ulema*s, who intoned the solemn chant of the proclamation. The military band struck up the notes of the Imperial Anthem, and the assembled soldiery raised the cry of "*Padishahımız bin yecha*" ("Long Life to the Sultan") Of the people only the thinnest groups imaginable were present, and no stir in the town suggested the idea that a great event was being accomplished. After the ceremony the Sultan embarked in one of his magnificent caïques, and, followed by a splendid retinue of other caïques, was rowed across the Golden Horn to the palace of *Dolmabahcheh*. The deposed Sultan now only *Murad Effendi*, was removed to a keşik of the *Cheragan Palace*.

A few days later, September 7, I went to see the far more imposing ceremony of the *Sabrê*. That ceremony, as we had often been told, corresponds to the coronation or consecration of Western monarchs, and is intended to confer on the Sultan the command of the land and sea forces of the empire. That solemnity had been almost daily announced, but put off from day to day throughout the three months' period during which the unfortunate *Murad* may be said hardly to have filled up a blank in the roll of Ottoman Sovereigns, as no one can be looked upon as quite a Sultan till he is solemnly *sabrê*. In the case of *Abd-ul-Hamid*, the Government determined

that no time should be lost, and barely a week was allowed for preparations.

Hamid II. is numbered as the thirty-fourth reigning Sovereign of the dynasty of Osman, the warrior chief from whom the Turks take that name of Osmanlis by which they prefer to designate themselves. Osman's sword, or scimitar as styled a relic as the oil vial at Rheims or the iron crown at Monza—has followed the destinies of the Sultans from Konieh, the ancient Iconium, the first seat of their career of greatness, to ~~that subsequent seats of~~ Government at Broussa, Adrianople, and Constantinople. There lives somewhere, at Mecca or Konieh, an old Sheriff or Imam, the descendant of an ancient sovereign race who waive their right to the throne in favour of the House of Osman, just as in Spain the Dukes of Medina Celi renounce their claims in favour of the successors of Charles V.

The mosque of Eyooob, where this consecrated rite is held, rises in the centre of the village of the same name, a straggling suburb of Constantinople, at the upper end of the Golden Horn, outside the Adrianople Gate. The spot was uninhabited in ancient times, and here the garrison of the capital of the Eastern Empire had their *place d'armes*, or parade-ground, outside the walls, called Campo, where every new Sovereign, upon his elevation, was proclaimed Emperor by the soldiers. In the early incursions of the Arabs of Mohammed these conquerors repeatedly pushed as far as Constantinople and laid siege to the

city, and it was in one of these encounters that Eyoob or Job, a companion in arms and standard-bearer of the Prophet, lost his life in the year of our era 668. Seven hundred and eighty-five years later, when Mohammed II. took Constantinople and chose it as the seat of his empire, he looked for the grave of the old Arab hero and saint, and on a spot revealed to him in a dream, built a mosque of white marble, where all his successors, except those who, like Murad V., met with a premature death ~~or deposition~~ received the investiture of the sacred sabre.

This solemnity, which must invariably precede the introduction of the representatives of the foreign Powers to the Sovereign, is purely a religious and military ceremony, and only the priestly and warrior castes of the conquering race are allowed to witness it. Eyoob's mosque is forbidden ground to the non-Mussulmans at all times, and especially on this solemn occasion, but some European Christians are said to have smuggled themselves in more than once, their curiosity making them reckless of the danger to their lives. It is a striking evidence of the little account in which quite one-half of the Ottoman subjects are held, that the presence of any of them at the consecration of their Sovereign would be resented as a contamination and sacrilege.

Public curiosity, so often raised and disappointed during Murad's reign, could not fail to revive on the accession of his successor. Early in the morning of the grand day I went down the Bosphorus in a caique

with an English gentleman, and we were the only two Europeans privileged to await the Sultan's arrival at the landing-place of Eyoub. On the landing-place were drawn up the Sultan's haliborders, in flaming scarlet coats, and wearing casques mounted by enormous plumes, some of them with fan-like, feathery appendages at the back, such that they could only with the great steadiness be balanced on the wearers' heads. The Sultan's ~~escort~~ superb Arab, more than fifteen feet high, milk-white, and exceedingly well looked, being walked to and fro. Both sides of the street were lined with troops, the post of honour being assigned to the very fine men of the 18th Fire Brigade. Farther on were cavalry, and the *zaptiehs*. In the middle of the street the Pashas of various ranks were swarming, and repassing before a dingy little shop. The Ministers were gradually assembling, and the hard villanous square stools with which the *cafés* of Turkish *cafés* and *consuls* were only too soon acquainted to their cost, for the *consul* sitting is still in its infancy in this country, and the true Osmanli still prefers squatting. Among the Ministers I noticed Ahmed Kaissari, of the *Ministry*, Redif Pasha, of the War Office; and, presently, Midhat. The Grand Vizier was absent throughout the day, owing to indisposition. Round the Minister's circle in that dark hole of a shop, barely nine feet by six feet, stood certain strapping ragnanuffus,

most of them in their shirt-sleeves, listening to, if not actually joining in, the great men's conversation. A telegraphic message was handed to the Seraskier, who, after opening it and reading it, passed it over to Midhat, the two exchanging glances and smiles which struck us as mutual congratulations on good news received. One of the ragamuffins—no man could believe such a thing if he had not seen it with his own eyes as I did—as he passed round the Pasha's group on a bench or settee that went all round the shop, stopped down upon Midhat as he was reading the despatch, and craning over the Pasha's shoulder, attempted, as far as he could read, to acquaint himself with its contents, a piece of impudent familiarity which elicited a grin of approval on the part of his *pals*, who crowded around him to hear "the news." The waiting was long, and the Pashas, tired of the delay, proceeded to indulge in small jokes, and even mild "chaff," neither more nor less than if they had been European schoolboys.

At last, about half-past twelve, the troops fell into their ranks; the halberdiers gave a last tap to their rebellious casques; the band struck up a lively march, and the Sultan's caïques, unannounced to us by the cannon, probably owing to contrary winds, hove in sight. Six caïques, rowed by their white-clad crews of stalwart Albanians, two of them surmounted by a gorgeous golden canopy, from the last of which the Sultan alighted, and was soon in the saddle, pacing leisurely before us on his way to the mosque. He

had on a brown mantle, between the folds of which shone the rich gold of his uniform, sparkling with diamonds. On his head he wore the plainest turban, without aigrette or any other ornament. He stood barely at two yards' distance from me, and I could note every feature of his face—a somewhat heavy and stern countenance of the true Armenian type, narrow at the temples, with a long and gloomy cast of features, large ears, and dingy complexion, adorned by a genial expression, or by any other ordinary dignity of aspect. It seemed to me the countenance of a ruler capable of great energy, but knowing his own mind and determined to follow his own way, a man conscious of himself and exacting his due. He came on gazing at me, and left, lifting his hand to his forehead, and stroking it for composure, but availing himself of the cheers with which the multitude of the Pashas greeted him. He rode on all the multitude which pressed on his horse-side, and followed him to the mosque. Under the leadership of a cavass whom the Grand Vizier had lent us, we presently forced our way through the serried ranks of the soldiery, crossed the never-ending village, and went up to some tents which had been reared on the hill, one tent being reserved for the diplomatic body, who attended in plain clothes, and another for other notabilities, native and foreign. Under these tents and on several hundred stands lining both sides of the road were a multitude anxious to see the proces-

sion as, issuing from the mosque, it wended its way to Constantinople.

The ceremony and the accompanying prayer within the mosque were of no long duration. We had hardly taken our places under our tent when some school-children, boys and girls began to sing, the notes of their ruthless music startling the zaptiehs' horses and going through our ears like a knife. The foremost ranks of the cavalcade then approached—first a squad of mounted zaptiehs, then a company of blue Ulemas; ~~later another of grey Ulemas; then,~~ again, a third company of green Ulemas. First those of the third, next those of the second, and last those of the first rank. Dignitaries of the Christian churches were mixed with the Ulemas at various intervals. Without any intelligible plan or order came the Pashas high and low, some unnoticed, others pointed out by the knowing men among the crowd, and hailed by the names of Riza Pasha, Khalil Pasha, Karatheodori, Redif, Midhat, Djevdet, Saffet, etc., ministers, marshals, under-secretaries, and so forth, riding two by two, all or most of them well mounted, all conspicuous for much gold lace on their coats, for the orders on their breasts, and especially for the gorgeousness and variety of the trappings and caparisons of their steeds. Wonderful to say, the Ulemas had by far the best horses and were the best riders. Theirs were also the loftiest statures, the noblest bearing, and the grandest costumes. This was especially the case with the green Ulemas,



who wore long flowing robes with enormous sleeves and huge bands of cloth of gold, and thick green turbans. Of the Pashas on the contrary, many were small and meagre men, and their seat on horseback seemed unstable. To the eyes as in France or Italy, one would say all the recruits for the church, leaving the military to be draughted into the army. Both of the Pashas and of the military many were old men, and some were both stumps to good effect. One man, perhaps, who cheered the ladies' admiration, bore on his face a long, all white, and by his skillful horseman, the Shieik-ul-Islam, Hassan Hamoudah, the head of a squadron of mounted halberdiers, and his guard, preceded the Sultan, who rode in a black cloak and rode alone, his gold and jewelled turban in the sun, his hawk like face still grave and stern but more composed than when he had been in the crowd—a face unmoved, a bust unbowed, a recognition of any man's salutation, appreciation of no speculation in his eyes, with no perception of the highest of his subjects, or of the mightiest among the representatives of the European Powers, and no appreciation of the bare faces, the elegant toilets, or the beaming smiles which the European ladies had got up to grace his progress. There is a peculiarity in the Sultan's face that it seems so to reflect the humour of the inner man as to make him look older

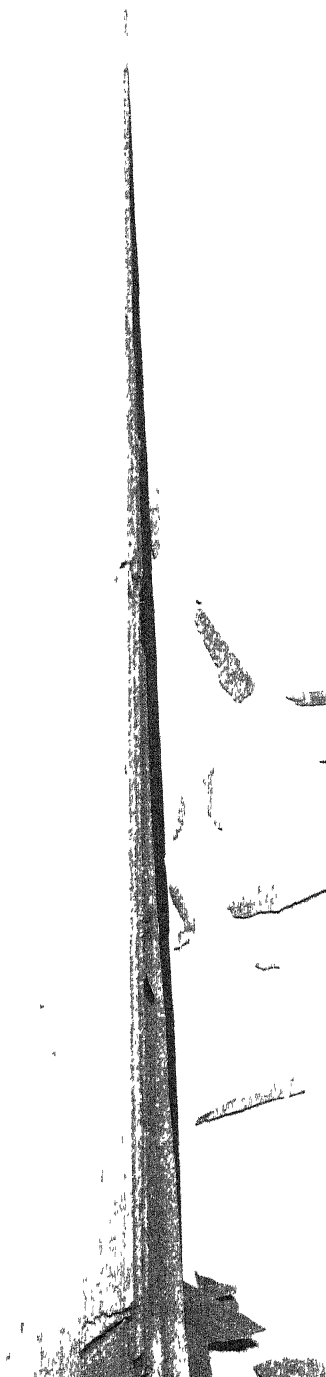
to the mood that sways him at  
a friend of mine who had seen  
an occasion asserted that he could  
in the thirty-fourth year which he  
told me he looked much older.

There were more halberdiers, than other  
and Turkish ladies' carriages,  
nob, which invaded all space  
of the tide. These people were fol-  
lowing Constantinople, where he had  
the son of Mohammed II., and the  
son of Abd-ul-Medjid, his father,  
had to go home to Dolmabacheh.

It was past two o'clock, and we were  
to trudge along in the rear of the  
crowd, it was owing to the stiffness of  
our journey, that all enthusiasm in the

crowd was chilled; perhaps utter  
displeasure were only the consequences of  
exhaustion and of the crushing dis-  
appointment which the people had so re-  
cently experienced. They cannot go mad with the same  
reasons. The people seemed de-  
spised of themselves a second  
time. In fact that, wherever I was,

popular applause greeting  
my appearance, neither was there  
a large crowd as I expected to see  
of the population of a vast  
city, partly be owing to the circum-



stance that the procession had several miles of the town to traverse, and was probably awaited by the multitude distributed at all points along the route of march; but neither on the banks of the Bosphorus nor in the thoroughfares adjoining the head of the Golden Horn did I perceive any very extraordinary concourse of persons, nor were there very many carques on the waters. What the people lacked of genuine feeling, however, they made up for in loud mouth noise and unseemly behaviour. Such a rabble that the worst pulchus of Naples or Madrid, London or Dublin, can muster, and you will never meet with such a rabble for rags and dirt, for pollution and hustling and rude horseplay, as the City of the Sultans exhibits. The contrast between the gold of the Sultan Sovereign, and of his priests and soldiers, and the squalor and wretchedness of so large a mass of people, is something appalling, and one wonders whether it at all struck the Sultan as the most deplorable fact facing him in his triumphal march, and whether he even dreamt that it in any manner occurred him to inquire into the cause of the evil and to devise the means of effecting its cure.

## CHAPTER VI.

## BULGARIA.

THREE MONTHS OF SULTAN MURAD.—PERPLEXITIES OF HIS MINISTERS.

IMMINENT SERBIAN WAR.—BULGARIAN ATROCITIES.—SIR HENRY  
 FRIEDT.—LORD DERBY.—NOTE: THE AMBASSADOR AND "OUR SPECIAL  
 CORRESPONDENT."

THE dethronement of Abd-ul-Aziz had been the work of a palace conspiracy, but had been hailed as a national triumph. Abd-ul-Aziz seemed the worst of all imaginable Sultans, and it was thought that any change must be for the better. Enough, besides, was known of Murad's gentle disposition to justify a belief that improvement would at least meet with no opposition on his part. He however exercised no more influence over the destinies of the country than if he had been an infant in the cradle, stifled after a three months' struggle between life and death. But the deposition of that poor demented Sovereign was an event at which no man could have the heart to rejoice; it made people sceptic as to any hope that could be built on personal government. Abd-ul-Hamid came to the throne a Sultan, like many other Sultans. He could not be better than the last,

though he might hardly be worse than the last but one. He would be only too happy if no blame of what the country deplored as a public calamity, fell upon him. Indeed, it had been again and again reported, to his praise, that the decision of the Ministers with respect to his brother's deposition had been delayed in consequence of Hamid's stubborn opposition to accept the crown so long as there remained the faintest shadow of possibility of the recovery of its wearer. Abd-ul-Hamid had shown himself a good brother; but that supplied no criterion of his qualities as a Sovereign. People would take nothing on credit: they waited to judge the new Sultan by his acts.

The three months' reign of that unfortunate Ma'ud had been fatal to the country in a variety of ways. That Ministerial combination which the Grand Vizier Mehemet Rushdi had been at such great pains to build up, and which the sad ailment of poor Ma'ud had greatly shaken, was completely broken up by the catastrophe of Taouchan Tach. It was easy enough to supersede Raschid Pasha at the Foreign Office; but different feelings were entertained about the death of Hussein Avni, which, though it was by many looked upon as a happy riddance, was also by many more considered, at this juncture, an irreparable loss. Hussein was the Prim of the May revolution. Drawn into the plot against Sultan Aziz, contrary to his own inclination, Hussein was dexterous enough to secure for himself all the benefit

of that *coup d'état*, which he almost alone carried into execution. He so took into his hands the management of the army and of the household of Sultan Murad, as to remove not only those he suspected as attached to the old order of things, but also those in whom he dreaded partisans of his rivals and opponents in the new Cabinet, and especially of Midhat Pasha. The Seraskier's ascendancy in the Government was becoming absolute, and, had he assumed the dictatorship, to which he evidently aspired, and to which the Sovereign's infirmity would have afforded the best opportunity—there might have been an end to liberty, but there would perhaps have been a chance for peace. From an early period after the outbreak of the insurrection of Herzegovina, Hussein Avni had conceived that peace for that province could only be wrought by war with Montenegro, and it is just possible, though not very likely, that, had he been spared, he might have been tempted to strike the blow he is supposed to have so long meditated. But his colleagues found themselves helpless without him. They called to the vacant War Office the Serdar Ekrem, or Commander-in-chief of the forces, Abd-ul-Kerim, a man of seventy, who was then at Nish watching the Servians, and in his absence they appointed as his Lieutenant or Vice-Minister at the Seraskierate Redif Pasha, the man who had effected the old Sultan's arrest under Hussein Avni's orders, and who, though he had Hussein Avni's despotic temper, did not subsequently dis-

play the abilities with which Hussein Avni was credited. The intelligence of Hussein Avni's death did not fail to raise the spirits of the insurgents, who, of course, could be but little affected by a proffered armistice and amnesty, though they did not suspect that the Sovereign in whose name the truce was made had legally lost all control over peace and war, and that any act purporting to emanate from him would be null and void. The attitude of Servia and Montenegro became every day less reassuring, and the Servian Agent, Christich, who was daily expected at Constantinople on a pacific errand, was said to be the bearer of conditions which the Porte could never consider admissible. What the Ottoman Empire, above all things, required in that emergency was strength, and the man who at the Cabinet represented the element of force, had been unexpectedly removed by the hand of a disappointed Circassian fanatic. By that tragedy of the 10th of June, Turkey was placed in the same position in which Spain was left when deprived of Pinnas in storm by a band of cowardly assassins, and Murad's surviving Ministers must have realised the feelings of King Amadeus, when he alighted a lonely stranger at the Atocha in Madrid, and saw lying in his hear, bathed in blood, the man who had been the bulwark and who alone could be the supporter of his throne. Men, however, must learn to dispense with the indispensable, and the question of peace or war was too pressing on Murad's advisers to allow them to

put off its solution even though Hussein Avni was no longer there to cut the knot. It is by no means sure that even Hussein Avni would in any extremity have leaped across the Rubicon, and ventured on hostilities in which, besides Servia and Montenegro, he might have had Austria and Russia arrayed against him ; but what is certain is that his survivors had no such daring, and that, though they talked big, and mustered up bigger battalions, they continued to the last amenable to the advice of a temporising diplomacy, and would perhaps never have found within themselves the resolution to come to blows. It seemed to them a wise policy to gain time, and throw upon their adversaries the odium of a deliberate aggression.

They did not proceed with the same hesitation with respect to another war which had just broken out, and on the speedy termination of which depended in their estimation little less than the existence of the Ottoman Empire. They turned all their energies to the suppression of the Bulgarian revolt. I have already in a former chapter,\* given some idea of the state of that province, grounded on irrefragable documents which were already before the world, and to which I had endeavoured, as I best could, to give the utmost publicity. I concluded from those documents that disorders arising from the ill-usage the Bulgarian population endured at the hand of Circassians and other savage immigrants, as well as from their Mussulman fellow-subjects, and in many in-

\* Vol. i., Chapter XII.



stances from the Government authorities, as if, in other words, as it were, the normal state, and that were referred to which it might be said would only be its natural consequences. Disturbances, however, took place in Bulgaria, and there, as in Herzegovina, the Government and its friends were unwilling to reflect the credit to its cause, but endeavoured to explain it by attributing it to a conspiracy, which, if it had any existence, would have been below the notice of official notice. The Bulgarian plot, like all other plots at Thessalonica, was said to be the plant of indigenous agents. It was described as sown by Serbian, Montenegrin, Austrian, Russian, and, to say it in one word, Slavist emissaries; and the bands that were seen in arms were stigmatised as alien adventurers and bandits.

There might be some truth in all these statements; but it is a fact that as exotic seeds, which thrive unless it be in a soil prepared to receive them, so foreign agitators have little chance of making impression or even obtaining a hearing in a community where disaffection has not spread widely and sunk deeply among the people. The tidings of that Bulgarian movement spread slowly, and attempts were made by interested persons to give it dates and to relate its circumstances in that manner which might best lead the world astray as to its real nature. It will be well therefore to enter into particulars with some minuteness, grounding statements on facts which were from the beginning before the public,

though the public at the time took no note of them.

In a letter in the *Times* of the 4th of May, 1876, it is written:

"There seems to be nothing serious as yet in the riot of which the village of Tatar Bazardjik, near Philippopolis, has been the theatre. The Caimacan of that district, a former domestic servant of Midhat Pasha, who it is out of such menials or minions that the rulers of the land are chosen, appears to have carried his tyranny beyond all the limits of the people's endurance, and the threats which had been held out against him have been carried into effect against some of his subordinates, the Mudir, or magistrate, of the village, and some of the police who have been killed. The affair, however, is said to have gone no further, although the discontent throughout Bulgaria is pretty general. The alarm in the official circles here has been very considerable. Two regiments quartered at Constantinople have been instantly sent by railway to the spot, and have been followed by other troops which had just been landed from Trebizond, and to which not one moment of breathing-time was allowed. The movement of the reserve forces is incessant throughout the empire."

And in a letter of the 11th: "From Bulgaria we have vague reports of some of those engagements which are described by the Turks as victories, but of which they boast with bated breath, as if with a

consciousness that no one will believe them any more than they believe themselves. The Mussulmans are arming, or being armed, in the towns, and the Christians are scared out of them and compelled to take to the open country. Troops are sent to Adrianople and Philippopoli with boundless baggage, and in such large numbers that a force of 100,000 regulars is said to be already collected in these districts."

These occurrences were confirmed in a letter of the 15th: "The news from Bulgaria is not at all satisfactory. Communication by rail and telegraph beyond Philippopoli is still interrupted, and the insurgents in great numbers are still mustering in force in the Balkans. The Ottoman forces in the north, regular and irregular, are said to be more than 150,000 strong. The Mussulman population are in possession of the towns, where they are arming and fortifying themselves. The Christians are scattered about the country, where terror and want drive them into the rebel ranks."

And in a telegram of the 5th: "The insurrection in Bulgaria is extending. The insurgents are burning the Turkish villages. The Bashi-Bazouks shoot the Bulgarians from the trains as they pass on the railway, and the telegraph is interrupted. The railway servants are demoralised."

And in a letter of the 18th: "The insurgents in Bulgaria are waxing strong, and have placed themselves in possession of the railway and the telegraph,

taking up a position between Sarembey and Bellova, where they seem to be ready to give battle. Great atrocities are daily perpetrated both by them and by the savage Bashi-Bazouks who are sent to oppose them, and a panic has arisen among the railway officials all along the line. Throughout Bulgaria and the other provinces of European Turkey the Mussulmans are flying to arms and fortifying themselves in the towns, while the Christians, unable to resist, are running for a refuge to the mountains, and will soon be in possession of the open country."

And in a longer letter of the same date, *i.e.* written seven days after the fall of Mahmoud Nedim, and the instalment of the Cabinet of which Midhat was the soul, it is stated: "But, admitting even that foreign Powers consented to leave this country to its own devices, acknowledging the right of the Softas to claim 'Turkey for the Turks,' and that its Government, be it under the present or any other Cabinet, under the present or any other Sultan, might be so reconstituted as to render the existence of the Ottoman Government at all possible, would the effects of any imaginable change be so immediately felt as to reconcile the revolted provinces and accomplish their pacification? This question may best be answered by the intelligence which reaches us from a variety of trustworthy sources as to the condition of some of the Bulgarian districts.

" 'At Perouchitza, a village of 2000 inhabitants,

at the foot of the Rhodope ridge, the population had given no sign of disaffection, and had, on the contrary, sent word to the authorities at Philippopolis to solicit protection against some Mussulman neighbours who evinced unfriendly intentions. No notice was taken of their application. Some of the Mussulman mountaineers of the neighbourhood soon assembled round the village and called upon the Christians to deliver up their arms. Upon their refusal a struggle began, which ended in the complete destruction of the village. Of its inhabitants only about 900 women and children were spared, who are now sheltered at Philippopolis in a state of utter wretchedness and destitution. 500 women and children of the village of Avrat Alan, which has met with the same fate, have also sought the same refuge. The villages of Batak and other localities are equally burnt, and their homes, bereft of their fathers and husbands, and starving in the streets of Tatar Bazardjik and Ouhlokeui. Bands of armed Mussulman marauders—chiefly Circassians—have been organised, who carry on havoc and desolation from village to village, and do not even spare the lives of inoffensive wayfarers. Murders are so frequent that some of the bodies are left to rot unburied in the fields. Twelve of the fugitives from Perouchitza, women and children, have been massacred at the very gates of Philippopolis. Complete anarchy reigns in one of the richest provinces of the empire, and only at two days' distance from the capital. In the town itself of Philip-

popoli the alarm is naturally very great. Rumours circulate of hostile intentions harboured by the Mussulmans against the Archbishop and the Bulgarian notables of the place, who are pointed out as the instigators of the insurrection,' etc.

“ Though reports of this nature are only a repetition of the horrors of which Herzegovina has long been the theatre, and by which that province has been made a wilderness, I am not prepared to assert that the reports are free from exaggeration, or that the Christians are not, on their own part, guilty of the same outrages as those they have to endure. On both sides we have men of the same race, in the same state of barbarism, arrayed against each other by religious fanaticism, and roused into fury by the sense of ancient grievances and long-cherished mutual rancours. But this hostile disposition of the population—universal, however latent; this liability to sudden and terrible outbreaks, bode no good to that scheme of pacification based on the establishment of equal rights between Moslems and Giaours, which is said to be the leading principles of Midhat's reforming policy. Nor would it be possible to deny that this state of things which threatens the best provinces of European Turkey with internecine extermination is in a great measure the result of the Government's measures; for the signal for these horrors was given by the authorities when they called to arms bands of undisciplined Bashi-Bazouks, recruiting them especially among those wild Circas-

sians, whole colonies of whom were purposely made to settle in Bulgaria with a view to terrorise the unarmed and defenceless Christians. To leave Turkey to deal with the revolted provinces at her own discretion, and free from foreign intervention, is to allow her to pacify by entirely destroying them. I have even seen the reports of several foreign Consuls at Adrianople, all agreeing on the almost incredible statement that the convicts in the gaol of that city have been called out one by one and offered the alternative between languishing in prolonged confinement and receiving freedom, arms, and money if they would enlist in the ranks of the champions of the 'Holy War.' There can be little doubt as to their choice."

And in another letter of the same date, it is again stated :

"Besides the 18,000 regular troops already assembled there, there are thousands of Bashi-Bazouks that are being enlisted and armed by the authorities, to the great terror both of friends and foes. The insurgents are supposed to muster about 20,000, but only about half of them may be reckoned as fighting men, the remainder merely consisting of women and children, whom either the fury of the Turks or the orders of the insurgents have driven from their habitations. Of the scores or hundreds of killed and wounded in encounters, of which official bulletins give us frequent accounts, not a few belong to this helpless non-combatant class, falling in a quarrel in

which they can take no part ; falling both during and after the action. The Bashi-Bazouks are indiscriminating robbers, as well as cold-blooded murderers, and driven to despair, their Christian adversaries are apt to become hardly any better, though the report that six of the Imperial Irregulars had been roasted to death at the Bellova railway station has lately been contradicted. 'The men were killed,' we are now assured, 'but in fair fight.'

"The theatre of the insurrection is for the present limited to that mountain region on the southern watershed of the Balkan, from which the Maritza flows into its broad valley, fenced in on one side by the main Balkan chain itself, and on the other by that long ridge branching from it now known under the name of Despoto-Planina, but still bearing in some maps its ancient appellation of the Rhodope. The Balkans here are mantled with deep forests in all their gorges, and were very lately visited by a snow-storm. The Rhodope is less lofty, but bare and rugged, and in many points forbidding and inaccessible. Along the valley of the Maritza runs the railway from Constantinople, through Adrianople and Philippopoli, and farther through the disturbed district to Tatar Bazardjik, Sarambey, and Bellova, where now is the terminus. Within this district, out of eighty villages, only fifteen are said to be still extant, the remainder having been depopulated and burnt, either by the Turks or by the insurgents themselves. In their anxiety to commit the whole population to accomplices to their despe-



rate venture. The whole region south of the Balkan does not properly belong to Bulgaria, but should, as a part of ancient Thrace, have been incorporated into the province of Roumelia or Adrianople. But great confusion has lately been introduced by the Turks in their territorial divisions, and the recent denomination of their *Vilayets*, or departments, has been arranged upon other than geographical or historical considerations. The revolted population is, however, mainly Bulgarian, though, as dwellers in the mountains, and chiefly horsemen, hunters and smugglers, the peasantry of the Balkan are not only a harder and braver, but also a more adventurous and troublesome race of men than their plains brethren north of the mountains, on the plain of the Danube. Abd-ul-Kerim Pasha, as Commander-in-Chief of the forces, left yesterday Constantinople by a special train for Adrianople.

And in a letter of May 19th "The Government of the Porte, whether consciously or unwittingly, is summoning to its aid whatever strength there may yet remain in the old Mohammedan element. The whole Mussulman population is astir—a large portion already in the ranks, the rest everywhere supplied with arms and ammunition, ready for any emergency. In Bulgaria, Christians and Mohammedans are divided into two camps; the latter masters in the towns, the former in possession of the country and of the most important ways of communication in some districts. Were the Christians supplied with available weapons,

with provisions and able leaders, their movement would soon acquire much larger proportions than were ever attained by that paltry Herzegovinian insurrection, which in a few months has reduced the resources of the Porte almost to utter exhaustion."

And in a letter of May 26th. "Meanwhile, that Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians have not been painted with too dark colours, we may infer from what we read in a letter from Widdin printed in one of the papers published in Constantinople, *La Turquie*, under the supervision and with the consent of the Censor of the Bureau de la Presse.

"The large boroughs of Derbent, Aviat-Alan, Petrich, and Outlookkoui, are now merely black spots on the map. Pillage, the sword and fire have made them a wilderness of ashes. As soon as these furious Circassians broke into one of these villages, their first care was to penetrate by main force into the houses—a cry of distress arose from the women and children there present, and five minutes later a dead silence followed upon the shrieks of these poor helpless as well as guiltless beings. The sabre, the yataghan, and the rifle did their work, and the fire achieved whatever had been left incomplete."

"A clamour against the further employment of these ferocious irregulars has been raised throughout the country, even by well-meaning and loyal Mussulmans; but the Government seem to trust to terror as the best means to overcome opposition, and we must prepare for a repetition of the same

outrages in Servia and for the general attitude of indifference on the part of those who should be to prevent or at least to denounce them. The plea is that 'the Christians are really provoked and unsparing in their treatment of the Mussulman foes,' but it should be remembered that the Christians are not like the Turks and other peoples a constituted and responsible community; if they then outrages if they are guilty of them, they are the result of a special organisation and not of a general system.

I deemed it then and deem it now wise not to dwell at greater length on the details of the atrocious atrocities in Bulgaria and to be content to share the feelings with the world which I have expressed in which the columns of the *Lancet* and the *Standard* of the English Press were filled to overflowing. What I am anxious to prove is that the massacres which the southern slopes of the Balkan Mountains, the scene, though they were heard of at the very beginning of May, attained their height towards the middle of that month, so when the Government which sprang from the Ministerial crisis of the 4th—that of Mehmet Rushdi, Midhat, Husein Avni, Abd-ul-Kerim, and Redif—were responsible for the means employed for its repression; that this Government, though they were, doubtless, harassed by the open civil war they had to sustain in Herzegovina, and needed large forces for the maintenance of order at Salonica and in other disturbed districts, were, how-

ever, not so utterly destitute of troops as they were subsequently represented to have been, but were able to muster the two regiments which were "instantly sent by railway from Constantinople to Philippopoli" before the 4th of May, and to add new detachments from day to day till, before the middle of the month, they had gathered there an army of 18,000 men.

It is evident, however, that the Government either had from the beginning exaggerated to themselves, or were bent on exaggerating to the world, the importance of that Bulgarian movement, and that, as the insurrection in the Herzegovina was thought to have acquired its vast proportions owing to the slackness with which the Government of Mahmoud Nedim had proceeded against it, it behoved that Grand Vizier's successors to act on the *Principis obsta* maxim, and to employ the utmost energy in stamping out the first sparks of the Bulgarian revolt ere they had time to break out into a great conflagration. Be it remembered that the new Ministers, and especially Midhat, had come into office preceded by a wide-spread reputation for liberal views, that they prided themselves upon their popularity, and conceived that their mere presence at the Porte ought to have been sufficient to inspire confidence, to allay disaffection, and to rally all parties around them. That their feelings should be wounded, and their anger roused, by those Bulgarian troubles inaugurating, so to say, their tenure of power, was extremely natural, and it was to be expected both that

they should try to disguise as much as possible from the public the magnitude of the outbreak, and that they should exert themselves to the utmost to bring it to a speedy end. So they did, in fact, and not trusting to the extent and efficiency of their regular forces, they sent word to the Governors to arm the militia, *i.e.*, those *Bashi-Bazouks*, *Pomaks*, *Chircassians*, and other "Turks," *i.e.*, Mussulmans of almost any other race than the Osmanlis, or whose religious fanaticism, heightened by love of plunder, lust, and thirst for blood, they could most safely rely. They had recourse to the terrorising instrument which had long been in readiness, and which they had at hand, and the end was such as could be obtained by such means.

It has been argued, not without some show of reason, that the Government acted in self-defence, and the safety of the State demanded extreme measures: that the first examples of murder and cruelty were given by the insurgent Christians, and their plot aimed at the extermination of all the Mussulman part of the population. Again, that the suppression of the revolt, and the means by which it was achieved, were matters of internal policy with which foreign Powers had no right to meddle; that the same or worse atrocities had been perpetrated in all ages and countries by rulers confronted by rebels with arms in their hands, and especially by rebels who did not rely on their own strength, and indeed did not even act on their own impulse, but depended

on alien support, and were the mere tools of a foreign intrigue. It was not a home faction, it was argued, but Panslavism, but Russia and Austria, that the Porte had to put down in Bulgaria, and against such formidable adversaries there could be no weapon the use of which was not allowable and justifiable.

The Government of the Porte might be entitled to the use of all these arguments, and these might be satisfactory to the European Governments, to which they were probably addressed. Public opinion, however, was not so easily quieted, and when the world was convulsed with the "News from Philippopoli," an altogether different line of defence was deemed expedient. Then it was that a Prime Minister of the Crown of England stood up in his place in Parliament, and declared that the alleged atrocities of Bulgaria were either idle fabrications or absurd exaggerations of sensational newspaper correspondents, and that there was nothing in the information they received from their diplomatic and consular agents to confirm the alarming reports. Diplomacy did thus throw a gauntlet to journalism which the Press was in duty bound to take up, and a conflict arose, conducive, as it was natural to expect, to the interests of truth. Towards the middle of July instructions were conveyed from the Foreign Office in London to her Majesty's Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, to send an agent to the Bulgarian districts to inquire into the alleged atrocities perpetrated there. In obedience to the telegram received on July 18th, Sir Henry

Elliot instructed Mr. Vice-Consul Wrench to proceed to Philippopoli, and applied to Mehmet Rushdi for a Vizirial letter, a kind of special passport accrediting him to the authorities there. But he observed that the Russian Ambassador, General Ignatieff, who also had no consular agent in that place, had from the first outbreak of the disturbances sent there one of the secretaries of his Embassy, Prince Tzerletew;—now, 1877, a private soldier in the Russian army in the field—and his despatches, confirming the worst horrors we had heard of before, had been for a whole month the theme of much comment and animadversion in the diplomatic circles on the Bosphorus.

Although so much later, and only upon the express order of Lord Derby, Sir Henry Elliot, as I have said, perceived the expediency of sending his own agent; but he changed his mind at the eleventh hour, and charged with the mission, instead of Mr. Wrench, his second secretary, Mr. Baring, attended by Mr. Baring's father-in-law, Mr. Frederick Garracino, a Levantine, then no longer attached to her Majesty's service. This substitution gave great offence to the English residents in Constantinople, and for obvious reasons. Sir Henry Elliot, either because he disbelieved the reports of the alleged atrocities, or because he attached no importance to them, had suffered more than two months to elapse without—if Mr. Disraeli's statement in the House of Commons is to be taken to the letter—supplying

her Majesty's Government with sufficient, or indeed with any information whatever on the subject. He had sent no man to Philippopoli, though he knew that the Russian Ambassador had despatched his own diplomatic agent to the spot, whose statements Sir Henry might have deemed it advisable to place himself in a position to contradict and to refute. Now as the Foreign Office desired that an inquiry should be instituted, it became necessary, not only to prove what truth there might be in the reports of the alleged atrocities, but also to understand the reasons Sir Henry Elliot may have had either to discredit these reports or to consider them unworthy the attention of her Majesty's Government. "It is Sir Henry himself," the English residents at Constantinople said, "who is on his trial in this inquiry, and who must answer as he best can for his long reticence. It was desirable for his own sake that the agent employed should be as fully independent of his authority as circumstances allowed, and it is greatly to be regretted that he should have departed from his first choice, which had been suggested to him by the Foreign Office, and which public opinion here had unanimously approved."\*

For their own part, the correspondents of English and other foreign journals in Constantinople were resolved on having an inquiry of their own, and they entrusted its direction to Mr. Schuyler, the newly-

\* See Note at end of chapter.



arrived American Consul-General and Secretary of Legation, who at once proceeded to Philippopolis, attended by a well-known correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who also wrote for one of the London prints, and by other journalists of good repute. At the same time the Government of the Porte, which ought to have been most interested in throwing light upon the subject, sent Kiam Pasha, General Director of the Administration of Indirect Taxes, as a Special Commissioner to preside over the inquiry. By order of her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dupuis, the British Consul at Adrianople, had also proceeded to Philippopolis, a place then may well wonder the worthy Consul had not visited before.

Those who remembered the results of inquiries of the same nature instituted, at the request of foreign Governments, at Damascus, at Jeddah, at Angora, and elsewhere, were not very sanguine as to the upshot of a dive into the well of truth, which came so late after the events, and after its waters had been almost hopelessly troubled: of a search into particulars which so many conflicting interests conspired to involve in obscurity. The subject however had a prospective as well as a retrospective interest, and the question lay not so much in the possibility of proving or disproving the atrocities which had been perpetrated in Bulgaria, as in the practicability of preventing the atrocities which were about to be

or were already actually being committed on the Servian and Montenegrin borders.

The inquiries of the English and American Commissioners lasted above a month, and the results were only published towards the latter end of August. Mr. Baring had done his duty diligently and conscientiously, and deserved the applause not only of the Government and of the Ambassador who had employed him, but also of those who had thought that his position as a subordinate member of the Embassy might interfere with the exercise of his independent judgment, and make him reticent on any matter which could seem disparaging to the conduct of his chief. Mr. Baring's report was found, on the whole, to agree with that of Mr. Schuyler's letter to the American Minister. Both these gentlemen had set out with a firm purpose to find out the truth; the Englishman however was supposed to be somewhat actuated by Turkish predilections, while the American was possibly swayed by contrary feelings. Both had to apply for information to the same sources - to the authorities of the Ottoman Government, and to such eye-witnesses as could be induced to volunteer their statements regardless of consequences. Both acknowledged that they had been sent too late, yet both were able to visit spots where the traces of the havoc which swept over the land were not wholly obliterated. As far as I was able to make out positive facts from the narratives of both parties, I thought then, and still think, one may

come to the conclusion that in the first place the movement which was attended with such direful consequences could hardly be described as an insurrectionary outbreak, although doubtless the alarm of the authorities and of the Mussulman population was very great. Agents of the Pan-Slavic Committees, one of whom, a Servian, was mentioned by name, travelled from one Christian village to another, striving, though with little success, to rouse the peasantry to a sense of the sufferings to which they were exposed, and promising the redress of their grievances. The Christians however were unarmed and unable to offer any availing resistance to the Mussulmans whom the authorities soon called into action. The Christians were in no instance the aggressors. As an example, the fate of Batak was cited, a flourishing Christian community of 7000 to 9000 souls, up in the mountains at about ten hours' distance from Tatar Bazardjik. That town was surrounded by eight or ten Mohammedan villages, the population of which had been excited by apprehension of murderous designs among the Christians, and were determined to be beforehand with them. The Turks assembled in great force round Batak. They summoned the Christians to lay down their arms, such arms as they had, and upon their refusal they overpowered the feeble resistance, invaded the town, broke into the houses, took many of the men prisoners, and laid hand on all the portable goods of the defenceless inhabitants. Thinking then, appa-

nearly that their robbery might be best concealed if none were left to tell the tale, they murdered one by one all the prisoners, as they called them out of a large barn where they had penned them up, and carried on the butchery from house to house, ending it in the church, a vast edifice in which a great multitude, chiefly of women and children, had run for refuge. Of the whole population, from 1800 to 2000 were said to have escaped. The bodies still lying unburied after three months were reckoned at about 2000 in the English and at nearly twice that number in the American report. Mr. Baring and his interpreter, who first visited the place, scared a pack of more than 100 wild dogs, who were holding their hideous feast on those mutilated remains. The bodies lay in heaps, especially in the church and on the market place—heaps of torn, mangled, and severed limbs—among them no bodies of infants could be seen, as the dogs had left nothing but the bones they could not crunch. I shall not dwell on horrors which the eye-and-nose-witnesses have only too well described, suffice it that the murdered lay at the time still unburied, and their murderers, still unpunished, were in possession of the stolen cattle, of the gold and silver, and all the valuables which prompted their frightful execution. The statement that both at Batak and other places, and more especially at Perouchitza, old men were burnt alive, women violated, then burnt alive, old people's eyes torn from their sockets, limbs cut off, pregnant

women ripped open, unborn babes carried on bayonets, little children made to carry the heads of their slain playmates, etc., must needs rest on the evidence of Bulgarians, whose accounts may be exaggerated. At Perouchitza the scenes of plunder, lust, and murder are said to have lasted three days. I must observe, however, that, as was natural to expect, the English Commissioners could bring no Bulgarian woman to confess that a rape had been committed on her person, with the exception of some very aged persons. The Turks add in their justification that rape is a crime forbidden by the Koran, but cases of men forgetting the injunctions of their religion are not unfrequent in any country. For their own part the Bulgarian Christians, if we may accept the testimony of their American friends, never killed Turkish women in cold blood, violated and tortured none, desecrated no mosque, and committed none of the outrages imputed to them in official Ottoman statements. The request made by Mr. Schuyler to the Turkish authorities to furnish him with the names of the authors of the alleged Christian outrages, or of the places where they were supposed to have been committed, received no answer, and some of the cases mentioned by Kiani Pasha, upon a close investigation, proved to be unfounded. One is glad, for the honour of our common humanity, to find in the English narrative signal instances of righteous and generous Mussulmans, by whose brave exertions many of the hunted Christians were saved,

sheltered, and supported, and by whom the horrid deeds of their fellow-believers were loudly denounced and pointed out, both to the authorities and to the Foreign Commissioners, too late for their prevention and safely for their punishment.

With respect to the conduct of the Turkish Government towards the men denounced by the public, as the original instigators or chief actors in these terrible butcheries, it is well-known that Earl Derby, her Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs, urged by the uproar that the statements of the public papers day after day and month after month raised among the English public, sent a note to his Ambassador at Constantinople, bidding him seek out the criminals and bring them to justice, sending out a vendor conviction of the worst excesses. Since that time, two Ahmed Aghas, and others. The Government of the Porte, to which the note was communicated by Sir Henry Elliot went repeatedly through the form of sending commissions, instituting inquiries, holding courts-martial. It however happened here as at Salonica. A few obscure wretches, guilty or not, were condemned and possibly executed. But Shekret Pasha never was fairly tried, made himself conspicuous at Constantinople on all solemn occasions, and in spite of all impudent contradictions, was appointed to posts of honour, to high command in the army, first on the Danube and finally in Armenia, where he is even now (July, 1877), putting

the reputation he has as a good soldier to actual test.

Both this Shefket and one of the Ahmed Agas, in whose house the President of the Commission of Inquiry was entertained as a guest, went about pretending that they had nothing to fear, that they had in their pocket the orders of the Government upon which they had proceeded. The real authors of the atrocities were the men at the head of the Government, Hussein Avni, Abd-ul-Kerim, and especially Midhat, who, although at the time only a Minister without portfolio, exercised a great influence on the Council of which he was President, and was therefore the soul of the Cabinet. There is no doubt that, nevertheless, and it could be proved, that Shefket in some instances exceeded his instructions, and was guilty of mere wanton acts of ferocity.

In the meanwhile the courts martial established throughout the province were carrying on a terrible havoc among the Bulgarians, convicted or suspected of having been implicated in the conspiracy that was said to have its ramifications throughout all European Turkey, and in the abortive insurrectionary attempt by which it was revealed. Many hundreds of these poor wretches, either very summarily tried or not tried at all, were hanged or shot at Philippopolis, at Tatar Bazardjik, Tirnova, and other places. The prisons of Adrianople, and even of Constantinople, were crowded with them. Hundreds of them were landed at the Golden Horn, loaded with crushing

trons, were lodged in the common jail, and thrown into dark dungeons, where in two or three weeks ten per cent. of them perished of the bad air and of the hardships and privations to which they were exposed. Two amnesties, one by Sultan Murad, the other by the present Sultan, passed over their heads, and the announcement that they would soon be free was even intimated to them. But as late as the end of June, 1877, to use the expression of a humane friend, who interested himself in their fate, "no bolt was drawn."

A variety of opinions prevail as to the judiciousness of Lord Derby's intimation to the Sublime Porte, and doubts arise as to whether even the position of Turkey as a protected or "guaranteed" state could justify so peremptory a dictation of the course her Government should pursue in its administration of justice. But if Lord Derby considered himself authorised in thus far interfering in the domestic affairs of a friendly state, and thereby implicitly disputing the claims of the Porte to the rights and privileges of complete independence, it is a pity that his lordship should not have insisted upon having his note treated with greater respect, and his demands complied with; a pity that he should have assumed a tone of reproach and command which was in the end only to meet with silent disregard and cool contempt. We are told that the note was never meant as an earnest document; that it was only intended to throw dust into people's eyes, to gain a cheap credit for humanitarian zeal, and to silence the



clamour with which the Cabinet was assailed by its opponents. But I do not think Lord Derby and his colleagues gained much by their policy of compactness. They saved their party at the expense of the country. England did not eventually come out with honours from that transaction, and it is not proved that a time-serving policy did any good to the Government that used it as a party weapon. A Government never gains much by giving in to its adversaries' views. It should have a policy of its own which it can stand by. When it has to give up that policy, it may as well give up its portfolios.

### NOTE

Some of the expressions occurring in the statements reproduced in the above chapter led to a controversy of a painful nature between Sir H. Elliot and myself upon the subject of which I am in justice to all parties give the reader some explanation.

At the time of the outbreak in Bulgaria I frequently received the visits of persons who furnished me information respecting the outrages which were of daily occurrence in that province, and who begged me to call the attention of the English public to the subject. I promised my assistance as far as it could be made available, but in every instance I recommended my visitors to proceed to the Embassy, and lay their complaints before her Majesty's Ambassador, who had greater power, or indeed who alone had

power to redress their wrongs. These persons, however, for the most part came back to me complaining that they had been coldly received, and that they had been unable to make any impression on the Ambassador's mind or heart. Upon an occasion in which I wrote to him on the subject, Sir Henry, allowing that "unfortunately, a great deal about the atrocities committed in Bulgaria may be true," but adding that "It is kept out of sight that at the commencement of the insurrection the same diabolical policy was followed in Bulgaria, as had been adopted in Herzegovina—viz., that the insurgents, or their instigators, deliberately committed unheard-of atrocities on the Mussulmans for the purpose of provoking retaliation, and consequent exasperation between the two races." I believe that there was here some confusion between the blame that fell on the deliberate acts of the Government and what might be looked upon as the outburst of the evil passions of an uncivilised people. Whether the Christians or the Mussulmans began is matter of little moment, though few will admit the hypothesis that either party slaughtered the other from a mere hope to be slaughtered in its turn. But Sir Henry went on: "Then the Circassians and others proved themselves to be the savages they were known to be." Precisely so; and the Government, whose task it was to put down an insurrection in a few villages of a province which was otherwise perfectly quiet and loyal, knowing that in the disturbed districts savage passions

were leading to savage deeds sent down upon the devoted province "those savage" that the Circassians and others were known to be, pouring thus oil upon the fire." In the charge of the murders to the end lay the guilt of the Ottoman Government, and it was impossible not to trace it to a desire to subdue the province by terrorising it.

Much as Sir Henry and I disagreed on many points, it was very evident that Mr. Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield did not receive his intimation from his Ambassador, when in his place in Parliament, he described the Circassians as in themselves sultans, till ing the ground and pursuing their legitimate avocations without molesting their neighbours). Much as I knew that Sir Henry Elliot was at variance with me on most other subjects connected with the Eastern question, I was not quite prepared for the course which awaited me on the 12th of August of that year.

Sir Philip Francis, her Majesty's Consul-General and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the Levant, had died on the 10th at sea near Smyrna, and his remains had been conveyed to his country residence at Buyukdere, whence they were, on Monday, the 12th, to be removed to the English cemetery at Haidar Pasha, near Scutari. Sir Philip had been a distinguished public servant, and had as many friends as there were Europeans in Pera Galata, so that his interment was expected to be, and actually turned out, an imposing and affecting

ceremony. It was arranged that the body should be wafted to its rest on board the despatch boat the *Bittern*, and the Ambassador and suite should follow on board the other despatch boat the *Helicon*.

Upon the invitation of Mr. Fawcett, the Assistant Judge, now Consul-General and Chief-Justice, I went at the appointed time on board the *Helicon* at Therapia, where I found several secretaries, attachés, etc., of all the European Legations. The Ambassador soon came up, and the boat immediately started from Buyukdere. Sir Henry bowed his way to the right and left through the lace-coated throng, and crossed the vessel in all its length till he came to where I stood astern in a group of officers, when the following dialogue ensued.

The Ambassador (in a loud voice and in a somewhat abrupt manner) "I did not expect to see Mr. Gallenga here."

The Correspondent (greatly surprised) "But why?"

The Ambassador "Why? I did not think you would ask the reason, after those articles."

The Correspondent (more puzzled than ever) "What articles, Sir Henry?"

The Ambassador: "What articles? Why, your letter in the *Times* of the 12th."

The Correspondent: "Surely there could be nothing in any of my letters offensive to her Majesty's Ambassador."

The Ambassador (always much excited, speaking

very loudly, and in a tone unusual with him: "Nothing offensive! What do you mean by your insinuations! What do you mean by 'obvious reasons!'"

The Correspondent: "I have not seen the letter your Excellency refers to, and I cannot recall what I wrote; but I am sure, if 'obvious reasons' are hinted at, those reasons must be clearly given."

The Ambassador (insisting): "Surely you ought to remember what you have written. And then, why did you say that General Ignatieff had sent his secretary to Philippopoli; you know very well that secretary (Prince Tzertelov) was only sent there to replace the Consul who was absent on leave. You ought to have known that," continued Sir Henry with a sneer, "as you are so intimate at the Russian Embassy." He repeated the words twice, as if echoing Mr. David Urquhart's charge that I was in Russia's service.

The Correspondent: "It seems to me that it little matters why the Russian secretary was sent, but the remark in my letter was to the effect that, as a Russian agent was sent to Philippopoli, whose reports might have exaggerated the misdeeds of the Turks, it was matter for regret that no English agent should be sent to the spot to give his own version of events."

The Ambassador (haughtily): "I ought to know best what to do."

The Correspondent (with vivacity): "And I ought to know best what to write."

The Ambassador: "Oh! I do not care for what you write; only I am surprised to see you here."

The Correspondent: "I am here by an invitation of Mr. Fawcett; but if your Excellency objects to my presence, I will not fail, if I find a boat, to land at Buyukdere."

The Ambassador (scornfully): "I do not care whether you land or stay on board," and with this he turned on his heel, and put an end to the conversation.

Sir Henry appeared before me quite in a new light: for he is quiet, rather shy, almost timid, in his usual behaviour. But he had evidently forgotten all his manners, and spoke with a vehemence which I am still at a loss to account for. Fortunately I was in my funereal mood; for I truly cared much for the deceased Sir Philip Francis, and full of the solemnity of the hour, found it easy to keep my temper. My letter, printed in the *Times* of August 2, is before the world, and every man can decide whether in alluding to our Ambassador I had exceeded the bounds of fair, honest, and temperate criticism. I was yet to learn that an Ambassador's "official" conduct should be forbidden ground, or that the discharge of a public duty should interfere with the civilities of private intercourse.

On the following day I wrote to Sir Henry Elliot, merely explaining that I had not intruded on

board the *Helicon* but was there on board at the funeral by the express invitation of Mr. Fawcett who acted as chief mourner.

The Ambassador's answer was as follows—

LEIGH  
April 13 1870

"Sir,

"I have received your letter of this morning. When Mr. Wrench and Mr. Fawcett asked me whether any of the friends of St. Philip Francis staying at Portici could come to the ceremony in the *Helicon* (very probably mentioning your name at the same time) I answered without hesitation that they were most welcome to do so.

"The part of the same day however I brought the English papers containing a letter from you in reference to Mr. Bunsen's mission arrived in a town which must and does everybody belonging to the Embassy from being brought into immediate intercourse with you and it was therefore with surprise that I saw you come to the Embassy and get into the boat which was to convey the members of it to the *Helicon*.

"As you did not yourself seem to perceive that the tone of your observations was incompatible with the continuance of social intercourse, it became necessary for me to explain it to you on board.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"HENRY ELLIOT.

"A. Gallenga, Esq."

I replied that I had read the letter in the *Times* to which he referred, but I saw nothing in it which could be construed into a personal offence to him or to any of the Embassy. However, that if it so pleased him, all intercourse between me and the establishment of which he was at the head should henceforth be at an end. I concluded by saying how sorry I was he should have chosen such a mournful occasion to give utterance to his displeasure.

“Therapia,  
“Aug 16, 1876

“SIR,

“In your letter received this morning you give me the assurance, which I am very willing to accept, that you were not conscious of any offence to myself or any member of the Embassy in your letters to the *Times*

“A newspaper correspondent has a perfect right, which no one calls in question, to comment freely on every public act of the Embassy; but whether the tone of the remarks is such as is compatible with the continuance of social intercourse with the writer is a point upon which those affected by them are entitled to form their own opinion.

“As you were going to be the whole day in the ship I was obliged at once to say that our relations could not be what they had hitherto been, although I greatly regretted that the necessity for it should have arisen, especially at such a moment.



"With regard to the Embassy Chapel, it can hardly be necessary for me to say that there can be no reason why you should not attend it as before.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"HENRY ELLIOT.

"A. Gallenga, Esq."

## CHAPTER VII.

## SERVIA.

SERVIA AND THE POWERS.—PANSLAVISM.—SERVIA AND MONTENEGRO.  
 —DRIFFING INTO WAR.—WAR DECLARED.—INEQUALITY OF THE  
 STRUGGLE.—AN INGLOURIOUS CAMPAIGN.—ITS TERMINATION.—ITS  
 RESULTS.

THE atrocities in Bulgaria determined the outbreak of that Servian war which had long been impending. At an early time in June, 1876, the prevailing opinion at Constantinople was that a conflict would ultimately be inevitable. The Herzegovinian insurrection was still rampant, and the Government of the Porte had from the first to the last declared that it could never be subdued till it was deprived of foreign aid; and though succour came to the rebels from Panslavist Committees in Russia and Austria, still the Porte was loudest in its complaint of the bad neighbourhood of Servia and Montenegro. The idea of resorting to arms to chastise those disloyal vassals, Prince Milan and Prince Nicholas, seemed to have been abandoned at Constantinople after the tragic removal of Hussein Avni from the Seraskierate, and upon the resolute protest of Russia that

she would consider any attack upon the independent Sovereign of Montenegro as directed against herself. The necessity of repressing the Bulgarian revolt had besides, throughout May and June, greatly crippled the strength of the Ottoman Government and though it could not spare for that bloody work any of the troops it mustered on the frontiers of the two Principalities, neither could it add enough to their numbers to feel equal to an open contest with them. The Porte limited its action to a concentration of its forces upon the Servian borders: the Servians on their own side deemed it necessary to muster up their battalions to the defence of their territory. The hostile troops were in presence and just causes and also vain pretences for mutual reproaches and recriminations could not be wanting. The Government of the Porte intimated to its vassal Prince Milan, the duty of laying down his arms at his Suzerain's bidding. The Prince pleaded his duty of protecting his subjects from the undisciplined band acting as vanguard of the Ottoman forces. But forces were in the meanwhile being enlarged, and advanced on either side.

In reality peace or war was for Prince Milan a question of existence. He had been so far carried away by the war-like enthusiasm of his people that hesitation at the eleventh hour would have involved not only danger to his crown and life, but also complete ruin to his state. What war might have in store for Servia, she knew not, but she might think

that nothing could be worse than the fate which awaited her should she have accepted the terms on which alone peace was to be maintained. Her position was precisely identical to that of Piedmont in 1849, when that little state, disregarding the strong injunctions of the mediating Powers, France and England, ventured on that campaign against Austria which led to the crushing disaster of Novara. Like Charles Albert of Sardinia at that juncture, Prince Milan found himself now completely isolated; for, as far as any man could judge from appearances, Russia was thoroughly crestfallen, and she would be compelled to abandon the Servian Government to its fate, while the Sultan's Ministers flattered themselves that they could bribe Prince Nicholas of Montenegro into an opportune desertion of an ally in whom he had every reason to apprehend a rival. Negotiations with Montenegro, we were told, were being actively carried on, and the only question was whether Prince Nicholas would sell his own inaction and the submission of the Herzegovinian insurgents for money, or whether his acquiescence must be bought by a cession of a slip of territory, and especially of that little fraction of Albanian coast which would put him in possession of the long-coveted seaport at Spitzza. This concession was the course which Russia had for many months been recommending to the Government of the Porte; and it was suggested that such a policy would not only gratify Montenegro's ambition for the present, but would also

ensure the good behaviour of that troublesome state for an indefinite future; for the seaport, if the Prince had one, would become his seat of Government, and it would be more easily accessible to the Ottoman land and sea forces than the present capital of Cetinje, guarded as this latter place is by the intricate gorges of its rugged mountains.


Deprived of the support of Montenegro and of the Herzegovinian insurgents, Serbia could only reckon on her own resources, and the rulers of Constantinople might trust the assurances left them almost as a legacy by the late Minister of War, Hussein Avni, that, were a collision to arise, "the Ottoman forces would find their way to Belgrade in less than two weeks." But even that conviction did not prevent the Servians from taking counsel of despair, for like Piedmont in 1849, Serbia looked upon herself as the champion of a great national cause, and she thought that even a defeat might, by a providential combination of unforeseen circumstances, lead to eventual victory. The calamities of Novara in 1849, Serbia argued, were only the forerunners of the triumphs of Solferino ten years later. It would be impossible to blind oneself to the fact that the Servian standard rallied around it all the hopes and aspirations of Southern Panslavism. Travellers who had recently visited the frontier of the Danube described the stir they witnessed all along the banks of that river as something surprising. Adventurers of formidable appearance crowded, in bands, all the

steamers, and landed here and there at the various stations between Widdin and Rustchuk, bent on errands of which they were at no pains to conceal the nature. Should hostilities break out, a *levée de guerre* of all the bands which were still lingering in ruins along the whole chain of Bosnian and Bulgarian mountains seemed likely to be the immediate result, and although the disciplined valour of the Ottoman troops, which were at this time described as well armed and equipped, could easily have overcome all resistance in the open field, the example of Herzegovina warned the Porte of the power the topographical position could give to a few determined men in an indefinitely prolonged struggle in the mountainous districts. Turkey's friends and enemies were, at this moment, hardly less fatal to her cause than her enemies. All the authority of the Government had come to an end in Bosnia and Bulgaria. Those provinces were at the mercy of the Mussulmans, Bashi-Bazouks, and Circassians — whom in an evil moment the Turkish commanders enlisted as auxiliaries, and the Valis, Cannakams, Mushars, and other rulers, utterly helpless, vainly strove to control the fury, and prevent the excesses of these savages who terrorised the country, and drove the population of the ravaged towns and villages to the woods. The Mussulman element was rampant in those provinces. Belfries which had been standing for thirty years were being pulled down; schools, frequented by Mohammedan as well

as by Christian children, were shut up and the teachers were everywhere hunted down and barbarously murdered as the instigators of revolt. Those homeless fugitives from the cities, those helpless peasants wandering about with starving families, would supply but indifferent combatants to the Christian cause, it is true. The pacification of the distracted region by the sword would, in all probability, be no very arduous task. But Turkey would have little reason to rejoice at her success, for her finances would not for several years benefit by the revenue of a land where the ripening crops were forsaken, no labourer, even in the immediate neighbourhood of Rustchuk, being willing to venture into the harvest field unless a Turkish *hutt* (18s. 6d.) was paid to him daily as a consideration of the danger he must needs incur of falling into the hands of the wild hordes who spared no man. The evils which were in the north the consequence of the civil war were no less grievously felt in those parts of the empire which were made to supply the means of bringing that war to an end. In Asia Minor the raising of the *Ban* and *Arrière Ban* of the reserve had left none but women to work in the fields. The produce of the interior was suffered to lie and rot on the ground, owing to the want of the beasts of burden by which it was usually conveyed to the markets in the seaports, every available horse and mule having been pressed into the service of the army as well as every able-bodied man. Yet a few more months of this state

of things, and the whole country would see itself confronted by the prospect of a general famine, and the Grand Vizier, Mehemet Rushdi, required no very great prophetic gifts to declare, as he did at that time, that he "could see no possibility of any improvement in the financial condition of the empire for at least two years to come"—during which, it was needless to add, the holders of the Turkish Bonds would be put to a severe trial of their patience. In such circumstances there were thinking men who were convinced that the influence of the European Powers could be exercised to considerable advantage, if it were possible to bring them together in a Council at Constantinople, and to put upon the Government of the Porte such a combined pressure as would place the safety of the Ottoman Empire and the permanent peace of Europe—so far as the Eastern question was concerned—on an equally sure basis.

The solution of the Eastern question, it was evident, should be arrived at, not by protecting the Ottoman Empire against the insurrection of its disaffected subjects, but by preventing Russia from turning that disaffection to her own purposes. Turkey had already sustained grievous and irreparable losses in her European provinces; Greece, Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro were taken from her past recovery, yet it was not apparent that Russia had gained anything—indeed, it might be proved that she had been materially as well as morally damaged—by every successive phase of Turkey's spoliation.





The policy of the Government of St. Petersburg was limited to a systematic endeavour to weaken the Porte by fomenting the discontent and ministering to the ambition of its Christian subjects. The Greeks, as bound to her by the ties of religion, and the Slavs, as akin to her both by blood and faith, were formerly supposed to be as ready to submit to the Muscovite sway as they were anxious to shake off the Ottoman yoke. It was to a change of masters people believed them to be aspiring, not to mastery over themselves. In the alternative between being Turks or being Russians, it was imagined there could be on their part no hesitation.

At the time in which the Hellenic movement began, before Navarino, the idea of nationality had no existence, or was scouted as absurd and chimerical. But since 1848, or 1859, that idea is uppermost in human thought, and threatens, or bids fair, to become the only possible foundation of the future social edifice. Like the Italians, the Germans, the Hungarians and the Poles, the Servians looked upon themselves as a nation entitled to have a country and a name. They aimed at the restoration of their kingdom to its ancient limits, and as their claims had been in so far partially admitted, that Belgrade and its dependencies were acknowledged as a semi-independent state, they thought that the rest, or part of the rest, would in time come in as a necessary consequence of the dissolution of Turkey, if they had only sufficient valour and wisdom to beat the Ottoman in

the field, without falling into the toils of the Russian in the Council.

Russia perceived very clearly that every step gained by Servia, by Roumania, and Greece in the path of independence estranged those states from the Northern Empire which once they acknowledged as their liberator and protector. She saw quite well that the dread they had of her ambition preponderated over any consideration of the need they might still have of her services. Even the nominal suzerainty of the Porte was less irksome to them than the risk of having to lean on the Czar for support ; but a necessity of following what had been for so many years a traditional policy, and the hope that something might turn up for her from the chances of an incessant agitation, had impelled Russia not only to give the insurgents in the Turkish provinces all the encouragement on which she could directly or indirectly venture, but also to propose, as a remedy for the insurrection, the annexation of the revolted districts to the territory of the semi-independent vassals of the Porte. "Give part of Herzegovina to Montenegro and part of Bosnia to Servia," Russia always said, "and peace will ensue, and the Eastern question will be adjourned for an indefinite period."

It is not easy to see why the Powers emulous of Russia did not from the beginning take up Russia's cry ; it is not clear why that cry should not have been unanimously raised by the Powers when they

were threatened with the outbreak of Pan-Slavian hostilities. By taking Russia at her word, by laying the basis of a future Confederacy at the Danube which might, like Switzerland, be established on a footing of perpetual neutrality, and placed under the joint protection and guarantee of all the European Powers, one might have hoped to see the only possible permanent barrier to the Russian ambition. By following any other arrangement, such as a six months or even a year truce, the Europeans have been obtaining but it would be at the expense of outraged humanity and with serious and permanent evils of all the political, social and financial evils of Turkey, as well as the suspension of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire and even the destruction of a far easier prey to the same fate than it ever was before.

Against my sensible and long experience of a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Slav and Montenegrins only two serious objections were made. One was the danger to Austria arising from the establishment on her frontier of states sufficiently strong to disturb the peace of her South Slav provinces; and this might have been met with the answer that Austria would have to contend with the same difficulty whether she chose to stand or fall with Turkey, for Southern Pan-Slavism would, in the end, prove as stubborn a fact as Italianism or Pan-Germanism had shown itself. The other obstacle lay in the existence in the Danubian provinces of Turkey of a

large Mussulman population, owners of the best part of the land, and equally unwilling to emigrate and to succumb to Christian rule. It is evident, however, that they will have at no distant period to submit to the alternative, for instances of Mussulmans subjected to Christian sway have again and again occurred both in Asia and in Europe, and whatever price might have to be paid to indemnify those Mussulmans who prefer exile for the loss of their landed property, would be a mere trifle in proportion to the treasure that has been and would have to be lavished to maintain the present unnatural system, to say nothing of the blood that would have to be spilt to enforce its continuation.

All these considerations were however unavailing in the disposition of mind evinced on both sides. The Turks acted on the impulse of despair, and were straining every nerve to add to their land and sea forces. The movement of troops to and from Constantinople was incessant. We had in the capital, in June, between twelve and fifteen battalions of the Redif, and their force, it was expected, would in a few days be raised to about 80,000 men. Riza Pasha had left for the Dardanelles, taking with him a battery of Krupp guns, with which he was to arm the forts at the entrance of the Hellespont. Hobart Pasha had left Therapia, and was soon to take the command of the fleet destined to visit the coasts of Thessaly, the Isles of the Archipelago, and Crete. The gallant English officer, to show his full con-

confidence in the skill and valour of the native seamen, ordered that no other European than the Admiral himself should be admitted aboard the squadron, the very engineers in charge of the machinery being Ottoman subjects and Mussulmans.

For the last two weeks of the month we were daily and hourly distressed by incessant alternation of alarming and reassuring news. But the idea that the appeal to arms was again being taken a firm hold of most minds. All the friendly remonstrances of the Emperor and Prince Rumanoff not excepted had failed to convince the Servians to desist from their march against the towns of Turkey. But the Government of the Principality had lost all confidence in the intentions of its people, and Prince Milan, who had been hesitating up to the last, was said to have decided to attempt placing Belgrade in the hands of the Russians, that the impassable barrier of the Danube might have for his country as well as for Europe.

For her own part Turkey had sent a *note d'adieu* to her disloyal vassal demanding either a disarmament or at least a withdrawal of the forces which the Principality, ostensibly for defensive purposes, had drawn up in formidable array on the border of its territory. All hope of bringing matters to some arrangement by peaceful negotiation had to be given up when it was understood that the mission of the Servian agent, Christich, to Constantinople had been indefinitely adjourned. Since the struggle had

thus, to all appearance, become unavoidable, all efforts had been made to localise it; it was even confidently asserted that the Ottoman Government had succeeded, or expected to succeed, in ensuring the neutrality of Montenegro, either by a strong pecuniary bribe or by a promise of territorial concession to Prince Nicholas, and it was also stated that Prince Nicholas was both able and willing to prescribe an equally inactive conduct to the Herzegovinian insurgents—always amenable to his influence—at least, during what still remained of the six weeks' suspension of hostilities proclaimed by the Government of the Porte. The question being thus reduced to the mere difference between the Ottoman Government and its Servian vassal, it was understood that the European Powers were disposed to allow the contending parties to settle it as they best could, the Courts of St. James and of St. Petersburg agreeing on that subject to a policy of non-intervention. Restricted within such limits, it seemed likely that the contest would be short and of no doubtful issue, for the Turkish army had on its side all the advantages of numbers and discipline. Servia was an open country, offering no position by which an invader's advance could be retarded, so that a first success in the field would lay open to the Ottoman forces the way to Belgrade; and it was added that the late military executions had so disheartened the disaffected districts of Bosnia and Bulgaria that the mere hordes of Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians,

and the attitude of the armed Mussulmans, would be sufficient to ensure the quiescence of the terrified Christian population.

These sanguine views however were destined soon to undergo serious modification. The confidence people entertained of the forthcoming disposition of Montenegro was greatly shaken, and the Sultan, Porto, we were told, received telegraphic intelligence that the mountain chief was concentrating his troops on that point in his frontier which could bring him nearest to Novi-Bazar, the head-quarters of the Turkish Army, which was to operate against Serbia. In Serbia itself Prince Milan was not disposed to have quitted, or to be comparing to quit, Belgrade, but not to abandon his post. His intention on the contrary, being to sustain his brave Serbian people, and to proceed to the head-quarters of his army, of which he was to take the command. The movements of the two Principities were to be made by common accord, and a common plan laid down by the Russian General Potemkin, whom Serbia had trusted with the supreme management of her armed force. On the other hand, the swarms of adventurers who, as I said, were lately crowding the Austrian steamers on the Danube, landing here and there at various points on Turkish territory, might raise the drooping spirits of the Christian population and rouse them to avenge the outrages which the undisciplined bands of Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians had been perpetrating, so that a general internecine

carnage of the hostile races in Bosnia and Bulgaria might be looked forward to as the immediate consequence of a commencement of hostilities, to the utter distraction and bewilderment of the Ottoman commanders and the aggravation of the manifold horrors of the contest. The excitement in the neighbouring Austrian provinces of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia was intense; and the Government at Vienna and Pesth laboured hard, as they told us, to "guard against surprises;" they had, meanwhile, ordered their Danubian steamers not to stop at any of the stations on the Turkish side of the river—a precaution which, perhaps, came too late, and the thorough efficiency of which might be doubted.

The conflagration which men had endeavoured to keep within the limits of the Turkish Empire might, therefore, have reached the adjoining territory, and the struggle might have assumed so savage and atrocious a character, that the European Powers, even against their wishes, irrespectively of their political views, and in the mere interests of humanity, might be compelled to mix themselves up with it, taking the field with forces, which, although immeasurably superior, might work out their purposes, if not with less slaughter, at least with more decisive results, and with greater regard to the milder rules and usages which civilisation prescribes to modern warfare. For it is impossible to deny that all the wars of which Italy, Austria, and France have been the theatres since 1859 could not sum up the horrors



of which the irregular Turkish troops were guilty in their suppression of what has been described as an "attempt at insurrection" in the ill-fated Bulgarian districts.

The die was cast at last. The Servian Diplomatic Agent, Magazinovich, presented, on Thursday, June 29th, the autograph letter of Prince Milan, proposing the occupation and annexation of Bosnia by Servia, as the only means to achieve the pacification of that province, proposing that it should be governed by the Prince as a vassal or tributary to the Porte on the same terms and by the same titles by which he holds his own Principality.

The Grand Vizier received the document without reading it, and simply asked time to consider it. M. Magazinovich sent on Saturday, July 1st, his dragoman to inquire when an answer might be expected, and was referred to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Safvet Pasha, with whom the agent was to have an interview on the following day.

In the meanwhile, in the evening, another note came in from Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, also addressed to the Grand Vizier, and very much to the same purpose as the Servian document. Prince Nicholas represented how vain had been the efforts of the Porte to effect the pacification of Herzegovina (he it observed that the Montenegrin note avoided all mention of Bosnia, with the same care as the Servian note shunned every allusion to Herzegovina); he blamed the authorities employed

by the Government of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz for their want of success, and described the sufferings entailed on his own subjects by a whole year of civil war, during which his Principality had been "enclosed, as it were, within a circle of iron," denied all ways of communication, and even deprived of the means of subsistence; and although he acknowledged that some of his Montenegrins might have joined the insurgents, he contended that he had done all in his power to observe the strictest neutrality, and to aid in the work of pacification, but concluded that he could no longer look unconcerned on the deeds of bloodshed and devastation to which the Herzegovinians—a people bound to his own subjects by all the ties of race and religion—were exposed, nor endure a state of things by which the peace and security of his own Principality were compromised, and was determined that, "*dès aujourd'hui, la tension de la situation passée soit remplacée par un état d'hostilité ouverte et déclaré.*"

The challenge was thus delivered, and it was evident that the Princes, whatever might be their inclinations, had no choice in the matter. We shall see at no great distance of time how a far greater and more absolute potentate was, under the same popular pressure, equally deprived of all freedom of action. Of all the fiction men write in the first chapters of modern constitutional charters, there is no one more egregious than that which declares the sovereign as holding in his hands the issues of peace and war.

The sovereign in these matters is merely the herald. Ambition is nowadays the ' noble malady ' not of kings, but of nations.

M. Magazimovich visited on that Saturday the foreign diplomatists at their country residences at Therapia and Buyukdere, and seemed to meet with ' cold comfort ' in his interviews with them. General Ignatieff told him that " his own feelings " and those of all Russia were with the Serbians, but that nothing could be done to help them. Sir Henry Elliot told the Servian Agent, rather bluntly, that " he could wish him no success. " It was stated at the time that when the Servian Government previous to resorting to irrevocable extremities had determined to send M. Christich as its agent for a last effort at negotiation, its private intentions were frustrated by Sir Henry Elliot, who telegraphed to Mr. White, her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Belgrade, to dissuade the Government of Prince Milan from the intended mission as the terms Christich was instructed to propose were rejected by the Porte beforehand. Sir Henry Elliot denied subsequently that he had any hand in thus removing the last chance of avoiding hostilities. But M. Christich and his colleagues at Belgrade firmly insist on the truth of their assertion.

The appeal to arms of the Principalities was deprecated and condemned on all sides as a rash and desperate measure; but the English in Constantinople were " quite sure " that Servia's movement had been

made by Russia's instigation, "and that," they said, "should put England on her mettle," while the Russians, for their own part, did not hesitate to assert that Great Britain was supplying Turkey with arms and money, to enable her to carry on in Servia the same war of extermination among the Christians which had already laid waste the wealthiest and most mollensive districts of Bosnia and Bulgaria. "The English, the Bashi-Bazouks, and the Circassians," said the Russians, "are the mainstay of the Mussulman power in European Turkey."

But although these mutual charges and recriminations might be, and some certainly were unfounded, and the Powers might consent to maintain a neutral and expectant attitude, it was not equally certain that the people especially of the adjoining regions, would not mix themselves up in the contest, and that their partisanship might not commit their Governments, in self-defence, to a course which would otherwise have seemed to them most unadvisable. About 3000 or 4000 Austrian subjects from the borders had been already incorporated with the Servian army, and volunteers in great numbers were daily flocking to Belgrade to tender their welcome services. Russian officers and veterans from all the revolutionary wars of the last twenty or thirty years brought the aid of their swords and their experience to the support of a cause hallowed in their estimation by the profession of national principles—many of these adventurers being attracted by the reputation of Tcherniaieff,

the Russian general raised to the command of the Servian army, "a hot-headed man," as his countrymen described him, "but certainly not deficient in ability, in knowledge of his trade, or in high dashing courage." The insurgents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the thousands who still lingered in the Bulgarian Mountains, where the Turks, masters of the plain and of its cities, had not as yet cared to pursue them, were the natural allies and auxiliaries of the Servians and Montenegrins. In spite of their large numerical preponderance, the Turks, it was expected, would have not a little trouble in warding off the attacks to which they would be exposed on all sides; their generals, were they even men of high capacity, would be easily bewildered by the difficulty of carrying on the campaign for which no one had hitherto furnished a plan. The Sirdar Ekrum, or Commander-in-Chief of the forces, Abdul Kerim Pasha, whose place should have been at his head-quarters at Nish or Novi Bazar, was kept by illness at Constantinople. There was hardly any officer in the service besides him deemed fit for the supreme direction of an army upon an extensive line of operations, for the confidence of the Turks in Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha had not been greatly strengthened by his late achievements in Herzegovina, and the generals in command in Bosnia and Bulgaria had not had sufficient opportunity to put their strategic skill to the test.

With respect to the position of the forces with

which the contending parties were confronting each other, we were told that the Turks had 32,000 regular troops in an intrenched camp at Nish, and 17,700 at Novi Bazar, and they had, besides, 10,000 men at Widdin. Novi Bazar, Nish, and Widdin stand at about the same distance from each other, on that broadish of valleys and mountains which slope down from the main chain of the Balkans into the plain of the Danube. Novi Bazar and Nish lie on the southern frontier of Servia, Nish in Bulgaria, on one of the streams of the Morava, where that river flows into Servia; Novi Bazar west of Nish, in Bosnia, on one of the tributaries of the Ibar, also where that stream enters Servia. Widdin lies on the Danube, in a little strip of Bulgarian territory projecting between Servia and the Wallachian province of Rumania across the great river. On the west, Servia borders on Bosnia, on a long line formed by the course of the Drina down to its confluence with the Save. On the north the Save, from the mouth of the Drina to its own meeting with the Danube, and then the Danube till a little beyond the Iron Gates, separate Servia from the Austro-Hungarian province of Slavonia; and, again, on the north-east and east the great river runs between Servia and Rumania, down to the above-mentioned semi-enclave of Widdin. Besides the forces immediately arrayed on the frontier, the Turks were said to have from 15,000 to 16,000 men in their various garrisons of Bosnia; 35,000 under Ahmed Mukhtar,

in Herzegovina : and 33,000 in Bulgaria altogether a regular army of about 150,000 men, well armed and appointed, with a considerable force of artillery, and a crowd of 50,000 Bashi-Bazouks and Circassian irregulars.

On their side, the Servians had been hard at work so to fill up the cadres of their regular army that they were said to be able to bring 60,000 men, tolerably well equipped and instructed, into the field, and they might have as large or perhaps a larger force of Volunteers and Militiamen in a second line, numbering among them many adventurers from the Slavic provinces of Austria and Hungary, as well as from Russia, France, Italy, and other countries. All their forces were on the frontier, with their head-quarters at Alexinatz, facing the Turks at Nish. The advantage of numbers, discipline, armament, and position lay most decidedly on the side of the Turks, even reckoning the 20,000 men with whom the Prince of Montenegro might strengthen the Servian ranks.

I shall not waste many lines in a narrative of the military events of the Servian war. Constantinople was the last place in the world where one could know what was going on beyond the reach of the Adrianople railway. That war moreover can have no technical interest, as it was fought by two masses of men neither of which was entitled to the appellation of an army. The odds were too great against the Principalities from the beginning, and the issue

could hardly be seriously doubtful. The Servians had in reality only a handful (about 3000 men) who could be described as thoroughly trained troops. They were indifferently armed, and even worse officered till Russian volunteers began to flock in in considerable numbers. The chance of Tcherniaieff, as that general conceived, lay in turning the campaign into a vast attempt at popular insurrection. He crossed the frontier on two sides near Novi Bazar and Nish. The movement on the west, on the side of Novi Bazar, would have brought him to the frontier of Montenegro, and enabled him to join his forces with that of Prince Nicholas, and that would have been the course recommendable on military grounds. But Tcherniaieff acted on political considerations, and trusted that a rapid advance on the eastern side, in the direction of Nish, would give courage to the Bulgarians (some of whose fugitives were reported as still lingering in arms in the mountains), and rouse the whole province "as one man," to the extermination of their exterminators. But it is a folly at all times to calculate on popular movements, and especially to base campaigning operations upon them. The Bulgarians had been utterly crushed by the fearful executions of May, and might well be expected to give no sign in July. Deceived in his reckoning, Tcherniaieff lingered on Turkish territory till he was driven from it without fighting, and carried on a defensive war on the frontier, which, although it extended to various points on the Timok



and the Drina, was eventually concentrated upon the valley of the Morava below Nish, was prolonged for weeks and months, thanks to the strong position of Alexinatz, and ended with the surrender of that place, after a smart action at Djunis, between Alexinatz and Deligrad.

All we learned from the campaign was that the undrilled Servians were poor fighting men, and that their resistance would have been even more contemptible than it was, had it not been for about 2000 Russian auxiliaries, some of whom stood their ground like true men; that the Turks, on the other hand, fought with their wonted ardour and courage, and all their successes were not due to their advantage of numbers and weapons, though, in many instances, the ground did not seem as soft to them in Montenegro as it was in Servia; and that they found in many instances on the Black Mountain a foe who called all their energies into play. With the exception of the soldiers' hardihood, pluck, and devotion, there was however nothing to praise about the Turkish armies. Commissariat, means of transport, ambulances and medical department, pontoon equipages, and all the other necessary equipments, were either non-existent or were of the most worthless and inefficient description. General Sir Arnold Kemball, one of the truest and most honourable English officers I have ever known, who was at the Turkish head-quarters throughout the campaign, and whose feelings were naturally enlisted in behalf of

the men who fought before his eyes, declared to me that had not the armistice come close upon the taking of Alexinatz and the splendid success at Djunis, the victorious Turks were so helpless that they could not have followed up their advantage even as far as Deligrad; though that fortress was barely a few miles from them across the river, and though the Servians had left no more than two battalions within it for its defence.

The contest which I have thus epitomised rapidly and from the beginning, assumed the character of a war between the Cross and the Crescent. The Government of the Porte put forth strong appeals to all Ottoman subjects for the first time without distinction between Mussulmans and non-Mussulmans, soliciting pecuniary aid on behalf of the common fatherland now in distress for the funds necessary to defray the expenses of the war. The call was said to have been answered by the Sultan himself (at that time a poor demented recluse who was made to contribute £T.15,000), by the Valideh, his mother, and by the Ministers, with or without portfolio—a score of them—as well as by some of their wives, among whom a sum of £T.6435 was collected, besides twenty-seven horses, and fifty okes, or about 140 pounds weight, of silver plate. Subscriptions were also opened with various results in the capital and the provinces, and several thousand pounds were said to have been collected at Salonica, Janina, Broussa, Bagdad, etc. The money came, as

a rule, from civil and military officials, chiefly Mussulmans, who renounced one month or more of their pay. There was little doubt, however, that Christian oblations would also presently be forthcoming, especially from the wealthy Greek, Armenian, and other merchants of the large cities, whose material interests were strongly bound up with those of the Ottoman Monarchy—so long as it could keep together. The Government of the Porte had also been actively enlisting volunteers for the army, accepting the services of several thousand Softas and other Mohammedans, and we learnt that a movement of volunteers anxious to join the standards was perceptible throughout the provinces of Asia Minor. Three regiments of the Egyptian contingent were already at Salonic before the end of July, and the *Bossuet* assured us that 2000 Turcos conveyed by English steamers, were daily expected at Constantinople. The Government summoned the believers to the holy war—legions of long-robed Softas, bands of half-naked Asiatics, troops of the ragged mob of Constantinople were clad in hastily patched up uniforms, and sent for a few days' drill to the camp at Beikos opposite to Therapia, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, and hence embarked for the front. The stir and noise by land and water, the tramp of men, the roll of drums, never ceased night or day. Arabs under their chiefs, Zeibeks under Amazons, men with wild visages and every variety of odd costume and armament, were con-

stantly paraded at the Taxim, the *place d'armes* near Pera. Nay, more! About 1000 Greeks, if we believed the *Bassiret*, had also offered to swell the ranks of the Ottoman army and their tender had been accepted; and there had been no lack of warm addresses in some of the journals published in the French and English languages, insisting on the duty of Ottoman subjects of all creeds to rush to arms in defence of the integrity of the empire. Had the Government of the Porte, as it seemed extremely probable, obtained a speedy and decisive victory, this patriotic zeal of the population might perhaps at no distant period have been productive of measures tending to cement the ties which ought to bind together the various classes of the subjects of the same state. An Ottoman nation, as I have often said, could only arise out of an Ottoman army.

The Government designed the uniform of the volunteers, which consisted of "a white shirt and trousers, with a red sash and fez, to which the Softas added the white turban, the distinctive badge of their order." Rules also were issued concerning the volunteers as well as the regular troops, with a view to enforce a strict discipline by the punishment of those who should be guilty of outrages against the defenceless population. Servia it was hoped would be spared the sight of the horrors by which the Bashi-Bazouks and other Mussulman auxiliaries had accomplished the pacification of the Bosnian and Bulgarian districts. So far as it depended on official

proclamations, the Russo-Serbian war was to be carried on on principles consistent with the practice of civilised warfare.

The only question was how far the humane intentions of the Government were to reach the disorganised mind of the multitudes sent out to wage war into the field with such revolting characteristics as to be seen to what extent the humane intentions of the Porte would or might be observed in the cruelties which could not fail to prevail, and to what extent a retaliation.

The *Evreni*, Turkish official paper, published the instructions said to have been given by the Slave Committee to the Turkish soldiers. These orders sanctioned the brutal and unchristian practice of the deliberate execution of the enemy, and the massacre of the unarmed and defenceless, and that the vanquished should be put to death. These instructions, if true, as we know, be apocryphal. But they were carried in every newspaper throughout Turkey, and the impression they worked among the Turkish combatants was not likely to render them amenable to those humane precepts that the order of the day was meant to inculcate. The *Impartial de Smirne* also informed us that the *Redifs*, or reserve men of those districts, though they acknowledged that the Herzegovinians, driven to revolt by misgovernment, might deserve their sympathies, were greatly exasperated against the Servians and Montenegrins who, in their

opinion, had no cause of complaint, and vowed that "not one of them would be suffered to escape, as no quarter would be given."

With respect to the Christian volunteers, men of sense in Constantinople did not hesitate to describe the movement as a mystification; the purpose of which would be accomplished if it could only impose upon people placed as far off as the English House of Commons, where Mr. Disraeli (now Lord Beaconsfield), relying on a despatch of Sir Henry Elliot, which he read aloud for the edification of the English public, announced that Christian and Mussulman subjects of the Porte were already fraternising on the battle-field, that the fusion of races was initiated, and the millennium was at hand. Unscrupulous newspaper writers told us that "the parading of these Christians excites the greatest interest and applause among the Turkish spectators, and that nothing can be more worthy of reflection than the greeting given by the Turkish public to the flag bearing the Crescent and the Cross, borne before the Greek volunteers—a union of those two symbols which are commonly supposed to be, to the Mussulman as to the Oriental Christians, typical of irreconcilable antagonism." All this however was mere moonshine; the Armenian volunteers were reckoned, in round numbers, at 100, and the Greeks at half that number. But in sober reality they never mustered more than 35; they were banished to the worst purlieus of the suburb of Kassim Pasha, and



tian volunteers in the Turkish ranks, because, as it was practised last year (July, 1876), and countenanced, let us hope in good faith and from mere ignorance and over-sanguineness of disposition, by an Ambassador and a Prime Minister of the British crown, so it has been revived with the same confidence and bold asseverance on the outbreak of the Russian war this year. It is perfectly idle to talk of Christian patriotism in Turkey. The Christians are not, and they feel that they never can be, one nation with their Mussulman fellow-subjects. Their condition as a conquered race remains substantially the same as it was four centuries ago—that of fretting rancour, ill-dissembled under the habits of abject flattery and cringing submissiveness. One by one the non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte, both in Europe and Asia, have in various epochs attempted rebellion, in some instances, as in that of Greece, Roumania, Servia, etc., with encouraging results. Each of the subject races aspires, not only to shake off the yoke of the Ottoman ruler, but to become in its turn the ruler. Neither the Greek, nor the Wallach, nor the Slav has achieved complete independence. Their aims and interests clash, and the Turk is enabled in some measure to hold his own by setting one of his domestic enemies against the other. But, however bitter may be the jealousy and envy between these Christian races, there is no doubt that hatred to the Turk is the universal dominant feeling among them. Were the Turkish Empire alone in



the world, and were the differences between the Government of the Porte and its Christian subjects or vassals to be settled within the Ottoman boundaries, the quarrel would not last long, or would even perhaps never have arisen. But the Christian subjects of the Porte rely on sympathy and aid beyond their country's limits, and the Serbians first and foremost took the initiative in a struggle which was forced upon them by their neighbours. Races which have been oppressed and superciliously treated as they were plunged in ignorance and slow awakening to self-consciousness and impelled to revolution. The Serbians were convinced that they were one nation, one people with the Bosnians and Montenegrins, and placed at the head of a kingdom which for a century or more extended its sway over Bulgaria, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Northern Greece. Their kingdom was overthrown, and their race subjugated and divided by the Osmanli, then at the height of his power; but the domination deprived them of existence was not irreversible. Kosovo was their Waterloo, which for nearly five centuries they aspired to avenge. Again and again they tried conclusions with the Government of the Porte, and, as I said, not without partial success. The Principality of Servia, like that of Roumania, has achieved self-government. Is it so strange that it should aspire to thorough independence? It has driven the Musulman from its own territory. Is it so unnatural that it should wish to rid its own brethren of Bosnia

of the Mussulman's presence. For several centuries the presence of the Crescent on European shores was looked upon as an outrage to all Christendom. Nothing but defeat and the impotence arising from division compelled the Western Powers to desist from those crusades which had their cause in an instinct of self-preservation as much as in religious enthusiasm. Christianity was overpowered on the Danube as well as on the Bosphorus, but it protested to the last. The quarrel was adjourned, not decided; and the time for redress and *revanche* could not fail to come.

The Serbs, or to speak more correctly, the Slavs of Servia and Montenegro, of Austro-Hungary and Russia, were bent on re-vindicating the rights of Christianity on the Danube. What they were waging last year was a war of race as well as a war of religion. The Servians and Montenegrins had not sufficient strength in themselves; they received only inadequate aid from the Austro-Hungarian Slavs, and were not able to withstand the onset of the Ottoman forces. The Servians were overpowered and the Ottoman received the congratulations of a certain class of politicians, and the applause of those of his Christian subjects whose fortunes doom them to sink or swim with him. Panslavism, whether northern or southern, was compelled to hide its diminished head, waiting for opportunities, which, as we now see, the immediate future would bring. Upon a renewal of the struggle the upward instincts

of the Christian people were sure to be re-awakened, and those independent or semi-independent states of Greece and Roumania, which had been looking on, shaking their heads at Servia, and affecting an unbounded devotion or amity to the Sultan, will not only be too glad, if allowed, to come in for their share of the spoils of Turkey, and to make hay while the Russian sun shines.

The main obstacle arising at all times against the only possible solution of the Eastern question has been the dog-in-the-manger position of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In her present distracted state, neither Austro-Hungary can neither fight Serbia, nor Slavism nor come to terms with either. It is not for it to have the Danube not kept under its heel, as the Magyar rules it Vienna and Petrograd called "the integrity of the Ottoman Empire" for Austro-Hungary a question of existence. Hence the Austrian name was throughout the Servian war more heartily and universally execrated by the Christian combatants than that of the Ottoman himself, their rage being scarcely assuaged by the resolution strangely and unexpectedly adopted by the blundering Andrassy Cabinet towards the end of July, 1876, of closing the Port of Klek against the Turks, a measure not justified even by the principle of the duty of neutrals as set down in international codes, inasmuch as it did not extend to the Bocche di Cattaro, or any other point on the Adriatic coast of the empire, and was thus of no advantage to Monte-

negro, who claimed the rights of a belligerent, while it benefited the Bosnian and Herzegovinian insurgents, whom Austria, as well as Turkey, considered mere rebels and brigands. Why Andrassy should have taken that strange step, and how it was that neither England nor any of the Western Powers, nor Turkey herself protested against it, was to most people a mystery. The move, probably, was suggested by Russia who, after straining every nerve to stir up and embolden Southern Panslavism, began at this time to ask what she would gain by its eventual triumph, and did not wish to see Servia succeed without her aid. When I speak of Russia I mean of course the Russian Government, for the Czar was at the time a member of the famous League of the Three Emperors, and the three great Monarchs, bent on localising the struggle, "embraced with effusion," whatever that might mean, at their Berlin interview, that the world might augur therefrom peace and goodwill to all men. But those Monarchs and their Ministers were merely the flies on the wheel, flattering themselves, not only that they gave the impulse to the chariot, but also directed its course, while the real impelling force decidedly resided in the Slavic Committees, which had both numbers and the consciousness of a good cause on their side. The point to be settled was whether the means and activity of these Committees would be sufficient to bear up the Servians in their struggle against the terrible material odds that Turkish big

battalions and cannon as well as Mohammedan enthusiasm, were mustering against them, and when the influence of those Committees in their own countries was strong enough to sway the will of the Governments, to baffle all efforts to localise the contest, and to engage Austro-Hungary and Russia, and perhaps other Powers, in the solution of the Eastern question which turn it is you like it is only a revival of the long adjourned quarrel between the Cross and the Crescent.

The result removed every doubt from the subject. The Servians were not only beaten, but slain by the unthinking multitude, and even by their imperial lips, as having deserved their defeat for their cowardice. The Russian volunteers who had gone to the rescue, in obedience to the Patriotic Committees, and with or without the countenance of the Governments, either died as heroes or were left as disappointed men. Servia had lost her glory, and all seemed to be over; but a few months later, and an Emperor saw himself compelled to take up the championship of the cause in which Servia and her auxiliaries had been worsted, and a Russo-Servian war sprang up as clearly from the Servian war, as the war of Servia itself had evidently arisen from the revolt of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## THE ARMISTICE

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### THE ARMISTICE.

SIR HENRY ELLIOT—DIPLOMATIC BUNGLING.—HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH THE TURKS—THERE NO ARMISTICE—RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES.—CONDITIONS OF PEACE.—THE PORTE, ITS SUBJECTS AND VASSALS—GENERAL IGNATIEFF—HOW TO DEAL WITH THE TURKS—THE RUSSIAN ULLIMATUM.

EUROPEAN diplomacy had given proof of its egregious impotence in its attempts to prevent the Servian war. It was now further to show its incapacity in its efforts to negotiate a peace or even to patch up an armistice. For more than three months a great change had been observable in the relations of the Sublime Porte with the Great Powers. With the death of Sultan Abdul-Aziz, or indeed with the fall of his Grand Vizier, Mahinoud Nedim, called Mahmoudoff, the influence of Russia had come to an end, and England was in the ascendant. General Ignatieff was the subject of all the animadversions of the Pera press, the virulence and violence of whose attacks exceeded all limits prescribed by the common decencies of international intercourse. He had withdrawn to his country residence at Buyukdere a few days before the usual commencement of the diplomatic

*villeggiatura*, and had soon sent his family to a sea-bathing place on the Crimean coast. On the 25th of July, *i.e.* about three weeks after the commencement of the Turko-Servian hostilities, he left us by the mail steamer for Odessa on his way to St. Petersburg. His absence, as he said, was not to exceed three weeks, but public rumour would have it that he was definitively recalled and even mentioned the name of his successor.

Sir Henry Elliot was thus left master of the field. The purchase of the Suez Canal shares, the encouragement given to Turkey to reject the Berlin Memorandum, the advice attributed to the English Ambassador with respect to M. Christich's mission to Constantinople on the eve of Servia's declaration of hostilities, and above all the presence of our Mediterranean fleet in Turkish waters at Besika Bay, had raised England's name to the highest pitch of popularity, and her Majesty's Ambassador reaped all the benefit of a situation which his skill was supposed to have created.

In those happy days of May when Mahmoud fell and the Union Jack waved in sight of Tenedos, it was a good thing for a man to be an Englishman. Our merchants as they stepped into the coasting-steamers on the Bosphorus, were received by the Turks on board with a radiancy betokening the best mutual understanding and sympathy. Lady Elliot was cheered and applauded as her carriage showed itself in the crowd across the bridge at Sultan

Murad's inauguration. It was vainly that people tried to damp the exultation of the Osmanlis by reminding them that the anchoring of the English ironclads at Besika Bay was rather a hostile than a friendly demonstration, as those vessels were there only to protect the Queen's subjects from such outbursts of Mohammedan fanaticism as had cost the lives of the two European Consuls at Salonica. It was all in vain. The Turks were satisfied that the good old Crimean days had come again. The English fleet was there; the Russian Ambassador had taken his departure, there was war with Servia, the vanguard of Russia; there would soon be war with Russia, and the Turk would once more take the field with *Bono Johnny* by his side.

General Ignatieff however was fully justified in his choice of the time for a holiday trip. There was then, diplomatically speaking, no king over Turkey. Sultan Murad had not yet been at Eyoob, and as we know never went there. No Ambassador could, in obedience to ancient etiquette, be presented to him previous to his consecration, and all international affairs had to be transacted without the Sovereign's intervention. Diplomats found themselves in as helpless a condition as that of newly-created cardinals while the Pope still keeps their lips padlocked like those of Papageno in the opera. There was nevertheless a great deal of business going on at the Porte and at the Embassies.

The shores of the Bosphorus presented at that



season an unusually animated scene. Steam launches, or, as they are there called, *Mouches*, sweeping the waters with the crimson flag of the crescent and star, were steaming for hours at the landing-stairs of our Embassies and Legations. It was now the aged and smooth Grand Vizier, now Midhat Pasha, now the cheery Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sadvet Pasha, closeted with one or another of their European Excellencies. Or it was not less frequently one of these diplomatists gliding down in his six-oared caïque, the bearer of an *ultimatum* or *ultimatissimum* from his Government, for the delivery of which he might have to hunt the Ottoman Minister from Yali to Yali, sometimes not unearthing him till he went down to the Porte or the Seraskerat at Stamboul. As intermediaries between these great men, dragomans and private secretaries, charged with minor messages, were incessantly bustling up and down on board the coasting steamers of the Chirket-i-Hazieh Company. All these worthy officials were employed in one and the same business, that of bringing the Turko-Servian war to an end, hard work at that time of the year, especially if the south wind blew, making the mere function of breathing an extremely arduous and painful task.

In the midst of that bustle Sir Henry Elliot had become the all-important personage. In Ignatieff's absence he had risen to the dignity of *doyen* of the diplomatic body, an advantage which he owed to the early date of his accreditation to the Sultan's

Court. The Servians had, in the latter days of August, sued for the mediation of the Powers to suspend hostilities, and the representatives of the six Guarantecing Powers met almost daily at her Majesty's Embassy under Sir Henry's presidency. They were the French, German, and Austrian Ambassadors, the Italian Minister, and M. Nelidoff, Russia's *chargé d'affaires* in Ignatieff's absence.

About that time, August 31st, it will be remembered, Sultan Murad had been deposed, and his brother, Abd-ul-Hamid, had ascended the throne. It was not likely that all the energy with which this second grandson was credited should tempt him to expose his sacred person to the hardship and dangers of a battlefield. It was not by drawing but by sheathing his sword that Abd-ul-Hamid would gain a title to his people's gratitude, and deserve such a monument as Marochetti's equestrian statue to Emmanuel Philibert in the Piazza San Carlo at Turin.

After a few days' discussion, on the 15th of September a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon. The Porte objected to a formal armistice, lest it should imply an acknowledgment on her part of the position of the two principalities as belligerents, and as such independent states. But she was willing to treat for peace, and with that view she engaged to send directions to her commanders in the field to desist from all aggressive movements. This arrangement, it appears, did not satisfy Russia, who insisted upon a formal suspension of hostilities. The matter

had again to be discussed, and the upshot was the acceptance by the Porte of a nine days' truce, which was afterwards prolonged.

As far as diplomatists and the public at large could at that time indulge in any conjecture, it was considered unlikely that any insurmountable obstacle would arise against the pacification of the Porte with the Princes of Servia and Montenegro. Not much would be said about the punishment of disloyal vassals, nor could it be expected that Turkey might gain or the two principalities lose much by the eventual settlement of their differences. The real difficulty arose with respect to the insurgent provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Servia and Montenegro professed to have taken up arms out of sympathy for the sufferings of their Christian and Slavic brethren of those districts. Their interference, while it harmed themselves, was unavailing to their brethren, whom they were now compelled to abandon to their fate. With her armies returning victorious from the Servian frontier, Turkey would have little difficulty in achieving the subjugation, or, as it would be called, the pacification of the ravaged territory. It was for the Powers to take up the part which Servia and Montenegro had unsuccessfully endeavoured to sustain. It was for them to see that the Porte brought back Bosnia and Herzegovina to their allegiance, without utterly crushing them, without making them the theatre of such atrocities as had disgraced the Turkish name in Bulgaria.

The Powers would have to convince the Turks that it was as little for their own good as for that of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians that those provinces should remain under their direct and immediate sway. The negotiation to that effect was evidently in very bad hands. The Russian Ambassador kept away from his post, leaving his embassy in the hands of a mere *chargé d'affaires*, for no other reason than to expose the powerlessness of his colleagues, and especially of his English colleague, to achieve anything without him. There was no doubt that the arrangement of the whole difficulty would have been easy if England and Russia could have been brought to a good understanding, and it soon became evident that such an understanding would spring up between the cabinets of St. James's and St. Petersburg. But I thought then, and wrote (September 11th) "that a cordial co-operation between two such diplomatists as Sir Henry Elliot and General Ignatieff in any imaginable transaction was as impossible at that moment as it had been at any time from the very first outbreak of the revolt in the Turkish provinces. Both these ambassadors had been at their posts for many years, and doubtless with the best intentions, each of them fancied that he could best promote the interest of his own country by crossing his rival's purposes—the Russian, by worrying and bullying the Porte, exposing its misgovernment and dwelling on the grievances of its Christian subjects; the Briton, by

palliating the shortcomings of the Ottoman Government, and referring all the Christian discontent to foreign—i.e. Russian—“intrigue.”

One has only to refer to the Salonika massacres and the atrocities in Bulgaria, to see Cretzschmar and Ignatieff putting himself out of the way, and employing his own agent to treasure up the most damning particulars, and Sir Henry Elliot, closing his ears to the strongest evidence, loath to believe, and still more to report, anything in disparagement of his Turkish friends.

It seemed to me evident, and I wrote so at the same date, that to the Governments of the six Powers only one of two courses remained open, either to limit themselves to their constitutional duty to which they had at first bound themselves, and allow Turkey and her subjects and vassals to fight out their own quarrel, or, as one of the Governments, Servia, had appealed to them, in the name of humanity, to impose an armistice by the weight of their combined authority and strength, and open a conference for peace. This conference should have been held in Constantinople; and on the principle that if you wish to have a thing done you should do it yourself, the negotiations should be conducted, not by ambassadors or *chanciers d'affaires*, but by the heads of the Governments or by personages of high rank, of consummate abilities, and free from the prejudices to which diplomatists by too long and too constant a contact and collision are unavoidably liable. That was the course adopted in 1856, at

the time of the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris, and there is no doubt that treaty was attended with good results for the general welfare of Europe, though it achieved little or nothing towards the settlement of the Eastern question. I repeat Turkish affairs should have been settled, not in Paris, or London, or Rome, or Baden, but at Constantinople. So long as the Turks had only to deal with these ambassadors, they would argue that the Governments represented by them were irreconcilably at odds on the Eastern question; the Turks would continue to be unmanageable; they would be confirmed in their fond conceit—of which I had often endeavoured to make English readers aware—that they, the Turks, were masters of the situation, and had only stubbornly to resist the pressure from any one quarter to be sure of support from the opposite side. The Turks fancied they had only to disregard all advice and refuse all proposals to neutralise the influence of the Powers of Europe, or eventually set them by the ears. “If the present complication was to drift them into a war with Russia,” the Turks reasoned, “would not England be compelled to fight Turkey’s battles?” And upon the strength of that conviction there was perhaps nothing the Turks desired better than to see Russia change her present attitude of a covert ally of Servia and Montenegro into the definite position of an open enemy. Whether or not they were justified in reckoning on England’s help in any emergency

is a point which had not then, and has not yet, perhaps been explained to them with sufficient clearness and sternness.

A strong Power like Turkey, when consenting to come to terms with an enemy by whom it was provoked, and whom it considers not an independent but a vassal state, may be actuated by three distinct considerations. It may wish to conciliate and humble its adversary, it may claim an indemnity, and, finally, it may be anxious to guard from attack and to enforce submission and good behaviour in the future. It was not likely that Turkey, if she accepted European mediation, would insist on the deposition of Prince Milan or even on the occupation of Belgrade and Sremschenitz. When Piedmont was beaten in two successive campaigns and utterly prostrated at Novara in 1849, the victorious and almost omnipotent Radetzki declared that he could not answer for the peace of Italy unless his troops garrisoned the fortresses of Alessandria and Genoa; but, although he had imposed that condition on the vanquished Sardinian King on the battlefield, the Western Powers—England and France—would not acquiesce in it, and stood up in support of the Treaties of 1815, so that Austria's demand had to be abandoned. It was hardly likely that the Powers now mediating between Turkey and Servia would sanction a departure from the arrangements of 1856 and 1867, or, in other words, that they would allow the re-establishment of Turkish forces

in any part of the Servian territory. The cession to an enemy, however victorious, of strongholds which he has not actually taken would not be conformable with the common usages of war, and the Turks had not as yet gained possession of Alexinatz. The demolition of the fortresses and the limitation of the number and cadres of the army might humble, but would not substantially and permanently weaken the Servians any more than the same measures affected the real strength of the Prussians after Jena. With respect to an indemnity, to exact payment in ready money from Servia would be, as the Italians have it, "*Carar sangue a una rapa*," or, in English, to take the breeks off a Highlandman, and any engagement by which Servia should bind herself to double or treble the amount of her yearly tribute to the eventual extinction of her war debt would only have involved future complications and disputes. The Porte ought, therefore, to have been made to renounce all hope of either territorial or pecuniary compensation, and agree to anything which might bind over Servia to keep the peace at least for a term of years, dispensing even with any act of homage and allegiance that Prince Milan might pay to the Sultan at Constantinople. There would, people thought, be no objection to the proposed construction of railways through Servia in communication with Turkish lines, as one could not see how such an achievement, advantageous to all Europe, could either increase the military strength



of Turkey or diminish the independence of any. But the real knot to the intricate Pavia business in the promotion of France was the Serbo-Montenegrin. The principle of the 1878 Peace was the conditions laid down by the great victors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Balkan states then began to quarrel. France, Italy, Germany and those miscegenous peoples of Slav and Semite and Montenegrin descent who were established on the peninsula of the Balkans, all stood up to entreat the great powers to help, and as it became more and more evident that this was of no avail, they began to quarrel among themselves. Only the most powerful among them, France, Germany, especially the latter, and Russia, in England and the United States, were strong enough to be able to back up their claims, and the peace of 1878 was a compromise, but still a compromise, and the Balkan peninsula remained a powder magazine, and it was found that the only way to get rid of it was to make it a part of a great power, and this was the only way to get rid of it.

The thirty days' suspension of hostilities expired on the 20th of September, but it was prolonged for another week, but the scheme of a formal armistice, as well as the terms of peace urged by the Powers, based on the principle of autonomy to be granted to the provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, met with stubborn opposition on the

part of the Ottoman Government, who entrenched themselves behind that banner of *non possumus* which they seemed to have borrowed from the Court of the Vatican. It was impossible, they contended, to let the Turkish army and the Mussulman population, elated as they were by their recent exploits, and inflamed by their newly awakened religious zeal, should acquiesce in an arrangement which would allow the disloyalty of Servia and Montenegro to go unpunished, and actually reward the insurgents of the three other provinces for their rebellion by making them concessions which it would be injustice to deny to the other districts of European Turkey. They pushed the clamor for their fidelity, kneeling as it were, the titled cult in honour of their virtuous prodigal and excluding his well-behaved brother from the banquet. The hundreds of thousands of soldiers they added, who at the peace would have to be disbanded and sent back to their homes in the various parts of the empire, would ask if it was only for this that they had endured the hardships of this campaign and shed their blood, and if it was to please the Great Powers in their own country, or those in the north or west of Europe, that the victory which they had all but accomplished was snatched from their grasp. It is always on this alleged inability on their part to curb the passions of the Moslem multitude, that the Government of the Porte ground their policy of resistance to the demands of the guaranteeing Powers. Their *ultima*

*ratio* was now the threat of a massacre of the Christians, to begin by a holocaust of the members of the Government themselves. Anonymous letters, they said, constantly reached the Ministers, and placards in the Turkish language were stuck up at every street corner of Stamboul, holding out menaces of popular vengeance against the Grand Vizier, Midhat Pasha and their colleagues, were they to accept conditions incompatible with the rights of Islam and the dignity of the Ottoman Empire. Shrewd persons were inclined to look upon these pretended menaces as mere devices and stratagems, a mere comedy of the Ministers themselves. "*Il se font écrire des lettres anonymes.*" But many of the European residents, and even some of the Diplomatic Body—first and foremost Sir Henry Elliot—allowed themselves to be disquieted by these chimerical apprehensions, and the panic in Pera was almost as general as it had been in May, at the time of the great Softa movement.

It would have been well, I think, if the negotiations for peace had been carried on independently of such fears or of the affectation of such fears. If diplomacy aspired even to the temporary settlement of the Eastern question; if it found it necessary to exercise a proper pressure on the Porte to obtain something like justice on behalf of the Christians, it should have been prepared to grasp its nettle, to impose or enforce its own terms on the Turks, regardless of possible consequences; and, leaving the Sul-

tan's Ministers to guard against their own danger of assassination as they best could, it should have treated the menace of Christian massacres with the contempt it deserved. The representatives of the six Powers should have intimated to the Porte that they held it responsible for the preservation of public order and security. They should have urged that if any massacres occurred they would look upon them as upon the atrocities perpetrated in Bulgaria, as the upshot of secret instigations on the part of the Government itself, and they should have thrown out clear hints that the least recurrence of such outrages would have been the signal for the immediate and joint occupation of the provinces of the empire by the land and sea forces of the six Powers. One could understand a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Turkey, but not that of a mediation which should be deterred from doing full justice to all parties by the mere blustering and threatening of one of them - a mediation which would hesitate about providing against the punishment of past excesses from a craven fear of provoking future enormities. Against the pressure of unanimous and determined Europe Turkey could have raised no opposition, and would have attempted none. All her contumacy arose from a conviction that joint action by all the Powers, and especially by England and Russia, was an impossibility, and that it was always easy for the Government of the Porte to play one of those great states against the other. This the Turks judged

from the attitude of the two Embassies towards one another ; for, while the absence of General Lambell from Büyükdere suggested a belief that Russia had bourned no hope of peace, and no wish for it, the very fact that Sir Henry Elliot urged on his colleagues his fears of Christian massacres to induce them to moderate their demands flattered the Turks that they might in any emergency rely on the support of England, and that in complying with any demands they need only consult their own pleasure and convenience.

Meanwhile, the absence of General Lambell was prolonged beyond the three weeks, and at the beginning of October it became evident that the negotiation conducted by Sir Henry Elliot was being let down at all points. His failure was attributed to want of energy and consistency. He was criticised for misconceiving the character of the Turk, and for putting too much faith in his power of friendly advice and persuasion, and to have forgotten that the Ottoman Government, as I said like the Papal Curia, opposes all pacific arguments by an obstinate *possessum*, and only yields to that force of circumstances or logic of events which it worships as another Kismet or destiny. He was also too seriously actuated by those threats cloaked in the disguise of fears by the Turkish Ministers, of outbreaks of Mohammedan fanaticism among the Mussulmans, and he relied for success on the *sacriter in modo*, patted the Turks on the back, and allowed them to

put him off with fair words and to slip through his fingers—all this it might be presumed, from no want of goodwill but through a fond preconception and a consequent error of judgment. It was full time, people said, that General Ignatieff should resume his place as *chef* of the Diplomatic Body, and change all that, that he should take up the part of King Stork, stand on the *fortiter in re* principle, intimate to the Turks that they are a protected state, impose upon them a *bona fide* armistice, and compel them to sign a protocol, binding them by an engagement to the Powers to do justice to their Christian subjects.

The conciliatory policy was carried by Sir Henry Elliot to its utmost stretch, and its result was that we obtained no armistice and the Porte, after refusing to accept the terms of peace proposed by the Powers, stubbornly declined also to give any guarantee of her fulfilment of the terms tendered in her own counter-proposal—that is to say, declined to admit the interference of the Powers to that end between herself and her subjects. The Ottoman Government accepted peace with Servia and Montenegro on the principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, but would not consent to a protocol being drawn up which should put the concessions they were disposed to grant to their subjects under the safeguard and guarantee of the European Powers. There was little doubt that in all these refusals Turkey was only exercising her rights as an independent state. She was justified

in refusing an armistice to rebellious vassals whom she was not bound to acknowledge as belligerents, and in refusing an armistice which would paralyse her military operations and cause her a loss of precious time. She was justified in asking to be let alone to settle her home affairs, and to compose her differences with her own subjects as she thought best ; the only question lay in the right Turkey had to consider herself and to be dealt with as a really independent state, and this was the point on which perhaps neither Sir Henry Elliot nor her Majesty's Government in London, as far as one could judge, seemed to have made up their minds.

The uneasiness arising from the lame up-shot of these diplomatic transactions was beginning to per-take of the nature of a panic. Hostilities had broken out afresh, and in spite of daily bulletins reporting the "complete victories" of the Ottoman armies, the war made no progress, the successful Turks never advanced, "the invariably routed and utterly demoralised" Servians again and again returned to the charge. The Turks felt that they must have Alex-natz, for all the villages around and in the rear of it as far as Nish were in ruins ; and out of the town there was no shelter against the inclemency of the forthcoming season. The Turks would accept no armistice ; the Servians would hear of no suspension of hostilities ; and the Porte would consent to no terms about peace other than those which suited its own convenience. Diplomacy had exhausted all its powers

of persuasion. It is uncertain whether it would ultimately resort to coercion, and the question was, "would the Turks submit to compulsion, or would they stand at bay and tear to pieces what they looked upon as their enemies at hand, regardless of the vengeance that might be wreaked upon them by the enemies at a distance?" Mussulman fatalism, it was said, never bestows a thought on the morrow. It yields to present impulse in utter defiance of remote consequences; it will slake its thirst for blood in the face of any certainty that its own blood will pay the forfeit.

There was, meanwhile, a very angry feeling among the English residents of Constantinople, most of whom seemed convinced that "whatever is lost to the Turks must be a gain to the Russians," and their wrath was turned hardly as much against Russia herself, "who," they said, "was after all only playing her own game," as against the English Government, whose duty it ought to have been to thwart it. Why did not England, they said, "from the beginning protest against the intrusion of those thousands of Russian officers who alone have enabled the Servians to hold out against the Turks through the autumn, and why did she allow Austria, in subserviency to Russia, to close the port of Klek?" The answer is implied in the question itself. Why are Russia and Austria proceeding hand in hand in a matter where their interests are clearly antagonistic? What Power in Europe can stand against the three



Emperors if they have settled it in their mind that they alone are to deal with the Eastern question? Whether the Russians and Austrians combined or the Russians alone occupied the provinces was to England a matter of secondary importance. Her own part of the task was limited to keeping the Russians from Constantinople, and most English in that city hoped that their country would always have sufficient forces to fulfil that mission. What these English asked was: "Is England's support to Turkey within the limits of her power to be absolute and unconditional, or will she insist, in return for her services past or future, on exacting full justice from the Turks in behalf of their non-Mussulman subjects?" In the latter case, supposing she forced the Turks obstinate and bent on that self-destruction from which, according to Lord Derby, no man could save them, would England join the other Powers in resorting to force—would she send her fleet to the Bosphorus, and rule the Turks till they have learnt to govern their subjects as well as themselves? This was what seemed to men in Constantinople not only the most plausible, but also the inevitable solution of the great question. Let England, for the Turk's sake and for her own, occupy the Straits and Constantinople, and so fortify them by sea and land as to be ready to hold them against all comers. Then let her, by the aid of a few scores of those Anglo-Indians who best know how to deal with Mohammedans, reform the administration of the empire, that

real rulers, a true governing class, may one day spring up from both Mussulman and Christian elements. Ulemas and other placemen might be expected strongly to object to this arrangement; but the mass of the people, no matter of what race or creed, were aware that the country could exist on no other terms, and in the mere prospect of such a consummation they seemed to breathe again.

On the 6th of October Sir Henry Elliot presented his credentials to the new Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid, and had a private interview with his Majesty two days later. He had to represent to his Majesty that England had been greatly moved by the recital of the excesses of which some Bulgarian districts had been the theatre, and to insist on the prompt and exemplary punishment of the offenders, whose very names had been supplied by Lord Derby's Note. The Sultan, properly "coached" by his Ministers, was ready with the answer that the wishes of the English people had been anticipated, and that the commission appointed to inquire into the atrocities in Bulgaria and to deal with the guilty according to their deserts, had already been for more than a week installed in the very centre of the ravaged districts. How that commission and all the other preceding and following ones discharged their office, and what punishments fell on the Shefkets Pashas, Ahmed Aghas and the rest, we have seen in a former chapter, and I need only add here that while Shefkets

was still at large the Missions of the district of Slieven, who had shown themselves well disposed towards the Christians, and by the destruction of some of the towers of this district which Skelleri Pasha would have destroyed, if he could not have taken Constantinople, and eventually if he were to do so. The worst criminals were now made to march and parade in front of the soldiers of Skelleri Pasha. Mr. Bading was too benevolent to be so much affected by the hundredfold increase in the number of prisoners by leaving them in the hands of the soldiers, as it has been very strongly asserted, and is contradicted, without any discussion, by the attention to the wishes of the soldiers in the matter. He is very generous and humane, but he is not a Christian. He says that it was not the duty of a Christian to do such a thing on such a subject, and that he was not a Christian. He has no doubt whether the Greek people were not very ready to wish to allow the Christians of Salonica to leave. Then Sir Henry did not believe in the Christians who delight in the murder of the Greeks to death." He strongly criticised the policy of France and Germany for the peace conference in which they "demanded the passports of thousands of exiles from the Porte, the payment of an indemnity to the families of the two Clerics murdered at Salonica. His idea was that it was not fair to trouble the Turks about anything, and especially about money, at a time in which they had the direct

political difficulties and the most frightful financial distress to contend with.\*

\* Such was the answer Sir Henry Elliot vouchsafed to the deputies from the Sporades whom I referred to him when they came to me complaining of Ottoman ill-faith and injustice. The Turkish or Southern Sporades are twelve barren isles of the Archipelago, of which Kalymnos is the principal, and the population of which, about 115,000 souls, lives almost exclusively by the fishery and commerce of sponges. These islands, like all the others in the Ægean Sea, were conquered by Solyman the Magnificent, who, with ancient Osmanli liberality, satisfied with a tribute, allowed them to govern themselves at their own pleasure. At the time of the Hellenic insurrection of 1821 these islands were involved in the national movement, and from 1828 to 1832 they were annexed to the new kingdom of Greece, and constituted the so-called Prefecture of the Southern Sporades. They were, however, in obedience to the list of the Mediating Powers, severed from Greece in 1832 and replaced under subjection to the Porte. The petition of the islanders to be incorporated with the semi-independent Principality of Samos was also disregarded, as "Samos, with such an addition, would have constituted a danger to the empire." The Sporadians, however, were allowed their former privileges of self-government, and no other taxes than their original fixed tribute were demanded of them, their rights being properly acknowledged and confirmed by a Firman or Charter of Sultan Mahmoud II. in 1835. Of these liberties, the islanders had the full enjoyment for thirty-four years. In 1867, however, possibly in consequence of some sympathy evinced by the isles on behalf of Crete, some attempt to interfere with their freedom was made, but soon defeated, thanks to the mediation of Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, acting in the name of Great Britain. The attempt was however renewed two years later, and this time with so much success that the isles had to consent to give up their autonomy, and receive as their rulers the Camakans, Mushirs, and other functionaries sent to them by the Government of the Porte. They were even then promised that their local privileges and usages would be respected, and that there should be no increase of their usual tribute. But in 1873, a Vizierial letter



be till the end of March—six months—or, more precisely, five months and a half from the date. The Ottoman Government could certainly plead very good reasons for their modification of the original proposal. A six months' well-assured suspension of hostilities would afford them the opportunity of withdrawing their troops from the unsheltered and unhealthy positions they occupied on Servian territory, and of bringing back the bulk of their army into good winter quarters at Nish and other places on their own side of the frontier, leaving only small detachments in the positions then occupied to mark their line of advance. It remained to be seen whether an arrangement which so well suited the Turks would be equally acceptable to their adversaries, and the resolution of the Ottoman Council had at all events this inconvenience, that it necessitated a new reference to the Powers, new consultations and discussions, and the loss of more time. There seemed to be little probability that the Servians could be brought to consent to the terms of a compact which were altogether to their disadvantage. They had themselves asked for a month's armistice, which, if granted, would have saved them from the danger of immediate defeat and invasion, and enabled them, as winter set in, necessarily interrupting military operations, to repair their losses, and by the aid of their Russian and other auxiliaries to drill and discipline their raw recruits and to fill up their ranks so as to be ready to meet the enemy on more equal

terms, if with the return of spring the armies were again to take the field. But six months' absolute inaction, the total cessation of that brigand warfare in which, if not the Servians themselves, the Montenegrins and the Herzegovinian insurgents had so decided an advantage over the regular Ottoman troops, was a condition altogether fatal to the hopes of the Slavic party, and although the Prince of Serbia, his Government, and people might be sufficiently disenchanted at the results of the war to be willing to welcome peace on any terms, it was more than questionable whether they would be able to withstand that national impulse which seemed to force the whole might of Austria and Russia down with it.

Sir Henry Elliot however always looking at matters from a Turkish point of view, and anxious to carry the negotiation to some satisfactory end before the arrival of General Ignatieff who was daily expected, concluded that there could never be too much of a good thing, and proposed in the diplomatic council the acceptance of the six months' armistice. He won over to his views the Austrian Ambassador and some of his colleagues, but the objections raised by the Russian *chargé d'affaires*, supported by the Italian Minister, led to an adjournment of the deliberations, and the whole affair was evidently in a muddle.

It was absolutely necessary that the *Deus ex machina* should bring the solution of the diplomatic

peated disappointments we heard  
ussian Ambassador had landed at  
return from Livadia and Odessa,  
n the morning of the 19th of  
ne in the Empress's own steam  
nd had Madame Ignatieff and his  
n, but not the rest of his numerous  
these circumstances because each  
at juncture a peculiar significance.  
l (we had got into the habit of  
neral, as men in England formerly  
ke, or as they now mention the  
should travel in an imperial vessel  
lence of the distinguished honour  
to confer on a deserving State  
ne importance he attached to his  
fact that General Ignatieff had left  
nd other incumbrances behind, his  
ed wife alone accompanying him,  
a that the errand on which the  
might be either not free from  
ong duration. Whether the oft-  
of the Russian Ambassador boded  
rtainly had this advantage, that it  
f the deadlock into which timid  
otiations had got our diplomacy.  
' knew his own mind, and that of  
er, with whom he had so lately a  
intercourse ; he exercised a power-  
er Viziers and Pashas, whom, as I



often said, he always addressed in the tone of a man conscious that he had eighty millions of men to back him, yet whom he alone of all Europeans contrived to charm and amuse, making them laugh at their own expense.

Some days were unavoidably lost in the formalities necessary to prepare the Sultan for the Ambassador's visit, which took place on the 24th. General Ignatieff left his country residence at Buyukdere on Tuesday afternoon, and was conveyed to Dolma bacheh Palace on board the *Licadur*, the super steam-yacht which had carried the Duchess of Edinburgh to Besika Bay and Malta, and which anchored in the Bosphorus for a few days, on her return to her Crimean harbor. The presentation of the Ambassador's credentials was made in the presence of the Ministers in the usual form. After the ceremony the General was asked by the Grand Vizier whether he wished for a private interview with his Imperial Majesty. The Ambassador, to everybody's surprise answered that he had nothing particular to say to the Padishah. All this was soon over. General Ignatieff took leave, went on board the imperial yacht and steamed up the Bosphorus, the band of the vessel striking up the strains of a triumphal march to the astonishment and entertainment of the passengers on board the three o'clock boat to Therapia in which we passed and repassed the Russian vessel steaming alongside of her the best part of the way. The Sultan, however, would not be baulked of his

interview. "As the mountain would not come to Mohammed, Mohammed had to go to the mountain," and following the Prophet's example, the Padishah, seeing that the Russian seemed not to care for a privilege valued by other Ambassadors as the greatest distinction, had an intimation conveyed to him that the Sultan had particular reasons to wish to see the Elchi. The *tête-à-tête* (with interpreters) took place thus on the 28th, and on the ensuing day General Ignatieff visited the Grand Vizier at Bebek. This extreme and almost unprecedented condescension of the Porte towards a foreign Envoy proves how correctly General Ignatieff had estimated the character of the men he had to deal with, and how likely it was that by his cavalier treatment he might bring them to what the English Ambassador failed to obtain by his blandishments and by his forbearance. I saw at the time the two speeches exchanged between the two high personages at the Russian Ambassador's presentation. The one delivered by Ignatieff, in the Czar's name, was a very severe lecture, as if from a superior to a dependent, advising him to put his house in order, and expecting his suggestions to be attended to. The answer was an apology for past shortcomings, an appeal to indulgence on the ground of grave besetting difficulties, and an engagement on the part of a new and well-meaning ruler to mend his predecessor's ways. Anything more peremptory on the one side, and more self-debasing, yet evasive, on the other, I never re-

member having read. With respect to the conversation at the private interview, and to the discussions with the Ministers, before and after that, it seems that General Ignatieff, putting off all other subjects, strove to come to some arrangement about the armistice. He played his cards with his usual skill. His mission had been contrived so that it must equally answer his purpose whether it was attended with full success or with apparent failure. In his frequent interviews with the Ministers, he insisted on the proposals made to the Porte by Sir Henry Elliot in the name of the six Powers, and subsequently abandoned by the English Ambassador, point by point. To begin, General Ignatieff went back to the proposal of the six weeks' armistice, explaining, as was natural, that the truce would be prolonged, should the progress of the peace negotiations render it desirable. The Turks met the Ambassador's demands with one of their habitual evasive answers. They accepted the six weeks' armistice, but stipulated that hostilities should under no pretence break out for two months after that period, and then again for two other months—in other words, they stood on their own proposal of a six months' armistice. The Russian Ambassador was equally firm on his own terms, and concluded by saying that if they were not accepted unreservedly and unconditionally, Russia's mediation would proceed no further, and he would have nothing more to say. The object of the Turks in wishing to ensure a six months' respite was to withdraw from a

field in which time would be their best ally against the enemy.

The truth is that it was impossible to hit upon a scheme of truce or armistice which would suit one of the contending parties without being inconvenient to the other party. What the Servians required was either a short armistice, followed by an advantageous peace, or a continuation of the campaign with Generals December, January, and February to fight for them. The Turks, on the contrary, wished for a whole season's armistice, not so much for the purpose of diplomatic negotiations as for warlike preparation; not for a peace, but for an adjournment of the struggle to a more propitious time of the year. The Servians would have everything their own way, unless the Turks managed to march to Belgrade before Christmas, or England and other Powers compelled Servia to accept Turkey's terms in defiance of Russia.

We were therefore brought to this, that the pacific negotiations involved the risk of a general European war. This was what diplomacy in Constantinople had brought us to, under Sir Henry Elliot's direction, "for these last three months dangling," as the *Lancet Herald* forcibly put it, "a languid hand into the Eastern puddle, dabbling in it, and stirring up the mud, but arriving at no other result."

As matters then stood, the position of Russia appeared unassailable. Either the Turko-Servian War must go on under the present conditions, or Turkey must accept the six weeks' armistice, unfavourable to

her. Even if she yielded so far, she would not be at the end of her trouble, for Russia stood on the terms of peace originally proposed by the English Ambassador—*i.e.* autonomy for the three provinces, which, said General Ignatieff, however the word may be defined, must at any rate imply a disarmament of the Moslem population, the punishment of the slaughterers in Bulgaria, and indemnity for the losses of the sufferers to be exacted from the authors of the outrages. Security, retribution, restitution seemed most just and reasonable. It is what Lord Derby had instructed his own Ambassador to demand, yet what the Government of the Porte had been hitherto unwilling to concede. There was reason to apprehend that England, or, at least, her diplomatic agent here, had too long abetted the Turks in their evil courses, too long palliated their faults, humoured and endeavoured to convert by merely coaxing them, encouraging them into the belief that, whatever they might do, England would always be with and for them, and stand by them against bullying Russia; whereas England's best policy, if she wished to save the Turks from the worst consequences of their infatuation and obstinacy, would have been to bully Turkey in her turn and for her own account.

Such a policy, I am convinced, will no less be a necessity for the future than it has been for the past, for even if England were some day to undertake to hold Constantinople and the Straits against Russia, for her own sake as well as on behalf of Turkey, she

neither could nor certainly would do so without enforcing on the Turks those demands or reforms on which Russia insists—demands to which the Turks will be sure to turn a deaf ear until they are driven to it by the pressure of absolute force. The Turks must either be let alone, or destroyed, or coerced. But all negotiation must inevitably founder in all cases as in this, where the would-be arbitrators and peacemakers attempt to interfere in a quarrel in which they really are parties; for instead of settling the dispute, they put themselves in the necessity of stepping on to the ground and fighting as seconds in the duel.

General Ignatieff had come to Constantinople with full determination to cut the Gordian Knot, and as it was sneeringly remarked carried in real earnest in his pocket the *ultimatum* which at any rate wrested the sword from the Turk's hand, and saved the Servians from instant destruction. On the 29th of October, disgusted with the endless subterfuges and chicanes with which the Ottoman Government attempted to hoodwink him, as it had for three months bamboozled Sir Henry Elliot, alarmed also by the news the telegraph brought him of the fall of Alexinatz and of the Servian defeat at Djunis, and obeying fresh instructions from Prince Gortschakof, the General represented to the Porte that "the Emperor Alexander was deeply concerned to see the dreadful and wanton effusion of blood still going on at the seat of war, although the principle of an armistice and the basis

for a peace had already been agreed upon ;" a humane sentiment with which the Sultan himself had expressed his concurrence in his late interview with the Ambassador. The Ambassador therefore insisted on his proposal of the two months' armistice, asking for a speedy settlement of the matter. The Minister for Foreign Affairs Safvet Pasha answered, accepting the two months' armistice, but reproducing those conditions about its prolongation to which Russia objected, adding besides that the truce only concerned the Servians and Montenegrins, but would not extend to the insurgent bands in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be summoned by the Porte to lay down their arms or withdraw from the Ottoman territory within a week, and, in case of non-compliance, would be hunted down by the Ottoman troops. Upon reception of this answer, General Ignatieff intimated to the Government of the Porte that they should immediately send an order to their military commanders for a cessation of hostilities all along the line. If his demand was refused, he should leave the country with the whole of the Russian Embassy. He gave them twice twenty-four hours' time for their definite answer.

For the whole of Wednesday and Thursday, the 30th and 31st, the people at Constantinople were kept in a state of feverish suspense. Would the Porte refuse the *ultimatum*? Would General Ignatieff fulfil his threat; and, if he did so, what next? It was observed, and not without uneasiness, that large and

heavy boxes, said to contain the archives and plate of the Russian Embassy, were as early as Tuesday—*i.e.* previous to the presentation of the *ultimatum*—being embarked on board the depatch boat *Taman*. The ordinary mail steamer for Odessa, which left on Thursday, was also described as laden with the private effects of the various members of the Embassy and of their families. In these preparations, supposing the boxes really to contain what people said, it seemed natural to perceive a settled and premeditated intention on the part of the Ambassador to break off diplomatic relations; but on the other hand all these open and somewhat ostentatious demonstrations of a firm purpose might be a mere ruse. General Ignatieff may have wished to impress upon the Turks that he was terribly in earnest, and he might carry the stratagem to the very extremity of going on board and weighing anchor, still trusting that the Turks might grow faint and recall him and submit at the eleventh hour.

As it is easy to imagine, the discussions as to the possible upshot were endless in our political circles throughout the time allowed to the Porte to make up its mind. On the whole, however, the prevailing opinion was that the Turks would have to give in. This expectation proved to be correct. On Wednesday evening, November 1st, it became known to a few persons that the *ultimatum* had been accepted. Orders were sent out at 10 p.m. to the Turkish commanders to suspend hostilities immediately and



all along the line. At the same time a steam launch was sent to Buyukdere with the bearer of a despatch to General Ignatieff, in which Salvet Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared that the Government of the Porte were, above all things, anxious for the continuance of friendly relations between the two empires; that by proposing a longer armistice than the Powers suggested, they had only intended to favour the Servians and Montenegrins, but then at Russia's desire they would agree to a two months' armistice pure and simple, dating from that day, and that measures had already been taken accordingly. General Ignatieff had thus shown to his English colleague in what language demands should be addressed to the Turks. He had got from them in one day, after his return, what Sir Henry Elliot, speaking in the name of all the six Powers, including Russia, had been unable to obtain in three months.

General Ignatieff was bent on striking the iron while it was hot. He intended not to unpack, and so give the Turks to understand that his journey was only conditionally deferred. He insisted on the terms of peace originally proposed by England—viz. the *status quo ante bellum* with respect to Servia and Montenegro, and autonomy for Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. The settlement of these points was however referred to a conference.

A ludicrous incident, characteristic of the country, happened to the steam launch which conveyed the despatch. It left the Golden Horn at ten

o'clock, fell short of coals when about half-way, and had to toil on as it best could to its journey's end, which it only reached between one and two after midnight, the distance being about eighteen miles.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CONFERENCE.

THE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED.—SIR HENRY ELLIOT'S JOURNEY.—THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE.—PRELIMINARY SITTINGS.—PLENARY SITTINGS.—THE CONFERENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION.—RISE OF MIDHAT.—POSSIBILITIES OF REFORMS IN TURKEY.—COLLAPSE OF THE CONFERENCE.—DEPARTURE OF THE AMBASSADORS.—SIR HENRY ELLIOT.

ON his return from Livadia, where he had been admitted to the innermost counsel of his master, the Emperor Alexander, General Ignatieff announced that there would be a Conference. He asserted that a cordial understanding had sprung up between the Russian Cabinet and that of St. James's; that this latter acknowledged having been led into error by the partial information it had received from its diplomatic representative at Constantinople, and that, although owing to some regard for those family connections "which," the General said, "submit England to the rule of a caste," Sir Henry Elliot would not be recalled, her Majesty's Government would send to represent them at Constantinople *an allatus* to their Ambassador, who

should be better acquainted with their mind and represent their true policy.

Only a part of this statement was confirmed. General Ignatieff had landed at Buyukdere on the 19th of October. On the 7th of November it was rumoured that there would be a Conference; and it was added that it would assemble at Constantinople upon the initiative of England, and that each of the Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte would be assisted or directed by a Cabinet Minister, or by some other statesman or diplomatist of high rank in the confidence of his respective Government. Three days later it seemed quite settled that the Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary for India, would represent England at the Conference, with the assistance of Sir Henry Elliot. But it was understood that it was optional with the other Powers to send or not send a special Delegate or Ambassador Extraordinary, and that Russia for one would leave all the management of her affairs to General Ignatieff. The same, it was believed, would be the case for what concerned Italy, the Italian Government having full confidence in its Minister, Count Corti. Ultimately, beside England, only France and Austria deemed it expedient to have two representatives at the Conference. For Lord Salisbury, his family and suite, accommodation was procured at the Hôtel Royal, formerly the British Embassy, and more lately the residence of Abraham Pasha, the Khedive's agent, and a particular friend of the late Sultan

Abd-ul-Aziz—a house situated in one of the finest spots in Pera, all in the sun, and enjoying a very extensive view over the Golden Horn, with Stamboul and the Sea of Marmora beyond. Although when the hotel was opened a month before it had been found sufficient for the entertainment of the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, it did not more than meet the exigencies of the English party who honoured it, notwithstanding the readiness with which the tenants of its apartments vacated the premises to make room for her Majesty's Delegate. Failing this, Lord Salisbury could have found no comfortable quarters, unless he had accepted hospitality at the Embassy itself. The Delegates of the other Powers had to shift for themselves as they best could, for the managers of the Ottoman capital no more foresaw the contingency that Pera should become the scene of a Diplomatic Conference than they looked forward to the chance of the College of Cardinals assembling there for the Conclave. At last, on the 5th of December, after a journey through Europe bearing no slight resemblance to a progress, Lord Salisbury arrived at Constantinople. He was received with all due honours at the landing-place at Tophanchi, and before noon he was at home in his quarters at the Hôtel Royal. Three days later all the members of the Conference had come together. They were Safvet Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Edhem Pasha, Ambassador at Berlin, as representatives of the Sublime Porte; the Marquis of Salis-

bury as special Delegate, and Sir Henry Elliot as resident Ambassador, acting in the name of her Majesty's Government; the Comte de Bourgoing, Ambassador at Constantinople, and the Comte de Chaudordy, Ambassador at Madrid, both plenipotentiaries for the French Republic; Count Zichy, resident Ambassador at Constantinople, and Baron Calice, diplomatic agent at Bucharest, accredited by the Government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Russia, Germany, and Italy were simply represented by the respective heads of their diplomatic establishments: Russia by her Ambassador, General Ignatieff; Germany by Baron Werther, her Ambassador; Italy by her Minister, Count Corti. The Conference thus, met in full council, consisted of eleven members. For their place of meeting the Government of the Porte had prepared the Admiralty Palace, near Tershaneh, the Naval Arsenal at Hasskeui, on the Golden Horn, at the foot of Pera Hill, beyond the vile suburb of Kassim Pasha.

The object of the Conference was to bring to some satisfactory end the negotiations which had been carried on during the whole period following upon the outbreak of the Herzegovinian insurrection, at Mostar, at Vienna, at Berlin, and other places, and the results of which had been such failures as the Andrassy Note, the Berlin Memorandum, and other documents, all of which were now mere waste paper, but all of which had thrown some light on the subject, were it only to show forth all its importance,

complication and obscurity. The Government of the Porte raised at first strong objections to the Conference, and especially to its meeting at Constantinople with or without the intervention of its own representatives. The Grand Vizier was still on the 11th of November telegraphing to Lord Derby his apprehensions that the presence of Extraordinary Envoys in the Turkish capital might create uneasiness and even give rise to disturbances among the populace. Lord Derby however insisted, and there was something in the declaration of the Russian Emperor at Moscow which, notwithstanding the trumpet blast of Lord Beaconsfield's after dinner speech at the Mansion House, might incline the Turks to look upon the proposed diplomatic meeting as the best chance offered to them of freeing themselves from the most urgent of their manifold difficulties. The reserves and restrictions behind which the Grand Vizier entrenched himself were said to be suggested by Sir Henry Elliot, who observed that, although her Majesty's Government was the original proposer of certain reforms and liberties to be bestowed upon the disturbed provinces, all necessity to insist upon them had been in a great measure removed by the scheme of constitutional government projected by Midhat Pasha, and now under discussion by the General Council. Sir Henry Elliot urged besides that Turkey would come all the easier out of the ordeal of the Conference the readier she showed herself to stand upon her rights, by proving

that she might have in any extremity force on her side. Acting upon the strength of these arguments, the Ottoman Government was now hastily withdrawing large forces from Albania and even from Herzegovina, to have them in hand and to be able to send them wherever need might advise. By relaxing the blockade of the port of Klek, the Austrian Government had unconsciously as one might suppose, favoured this manœuvre, allowing the battalions of the most valiant and war-inured troops to embark on board the transport vessels destined only to convey soldiers disabled by wounds or disease. The Turks besides had ordered the levy of 150 battalions of Redifs, and were issuing a third million of paper money to defray expenses. The Porte nevertheless ended by signifying its acceptance, and the presidency of the Conference was assigned to Edhem Pasha, its first representative.

The representatives of the six European Powers however, apparently by previous understanding, had come to the very natural resolution that preliminary meetings should be held among themselves at the Russian Embassy, under the presidency of General Ignatieff, as *doyen* of the Diplomatic Body, with a view to come to some distinct agreement as to the proposals to be laid before the Porte in the name of the six Powers before the two representatives of the Ottoman Government were invited to attend the Conference. In these preliminary sittings the Marquis of Salisbury had the advantage, which he was



presumed to have obtained by his recent interviews with the Sovereigns and statesmen of four of the Courts represented at the Conference, of being acquainted with the thoughts and wishes of five out of the six Governments including of course his own. On the other hand, General Ignatieff after his long intercourse with the Emperor Alexander and Prince Gortschakoff at Livadia, was very naturally supposed to have divined deeply into the minds of the autocratic and irresponsible rulers of his country, and to know to what extent their hidden designs corresponded with the open declarations which had—one did not well know whether more edited or more startled the world.

The bases of negotiation for the Conference were understood to be, the *status quo ante bellum* as the conditions of peace with Servia and Montenegro; the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; the renunciation of all and each of the Powers of any advantage that might accrue to any of them from the results of the Conference, and finally "autonomy" for Bosnia and Herzegovina and reforms for Bulgaria. With respect to these provinces, Russia had from the outset presented to the Powers the main points which she thought should be recommended to the Sublime Porte. They were the following: 1. General disarmament of Turks and Christians in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria; 2. The election of all officers by the townships or parishes, none but natives being eligible; 3. The formation of a militia and a police,

to consist of Christians and Mussulmans, in proportion to the numerical strength of each denomination ; 4. The concentration of the Turkish troops in certain towns, to be fixed in advance ; 5. The disbanding of the irregular troops, and the return of the Circassians to the purely Mussulman provinces ; 6. The abolition of the practice of farming out taxes and the replacement of tithes by pecuniary imposts, to be fixed with the concurrence of the ratepayers ; 7. The use by the courts and administrative authorities of the several Slavonic languages spoken in the various provinces ; 8. The convening of an assembly of notables, to advise the Conference upon the administrative reforms to be introduced. (It seemed intended that a special assembly should be convened for each province, and that the Bulgarian bishop should preside over the sittings of the Bulgarian Notables ) 9. Christian governors to be appointed by the Porte, with the consent of the Powers, for the three provinces, to officiate five or six years ; 10. The punishment of all persons concerned in the late horrors and the indemnification of the families who had suffered ; 11. The institution of Consular Commissions to superintend the carrying out of the above reforms.

This programme was materially departed from even before the Delegates met for their first preliminary sitting. The terms proposed to the Porte were further reduced, both as to their numbers and to their gravity at each ensuing meeting. The pre-

liminary labours of the European Delegates, which began on the 11th of December, terminated on the 20th. The first plenary meeting of all the members, including the two Turkish Plenipotentiaries, was to be held on the following day; but it was put off till the 23rd, when the solemn opening of the Conference took place at Tershaneh at one o'clock. It continued its sittings throughout that month and during part of the ensuing January, 1857, up to the 20th, when at last it broke up, all its European members taking their departure with the full acknowledgment that nothing had been accomplished.

It would be of little importance at the present day to undertake a detailed narrative of the proceedings of a Diplomatic Body which so signally failed in its mission. It will be more to the purpose if I attempt to point out the causes which led to their defeat; for even after the event I am inclined to think that under other conditions and with a different management, the great object, which was to prevent a Russo-Turkish war and the eventual calamities not unlikely to ensue from it, might have been attained. Everything depended on a previous understanding, and the question arose as to the possibility of a real and thorough unity of mind and will on the part of Europe, and especially of England and Russia. "Only let the Marquis of Salisbury and General Ignatieff," as was said before those two statesmen came together, "shake hands as true men,

only let them sit down to work without reserve, without the apprehension of preconceptions or *arrière pensées* on either side, and all would be well, and the peace of Europe as well as the just and humane treatment of all the subjects of the Porte would be assured."

Nothing in the world would have been more interesting than to be present at the first *tête-à-tête* between the English special Delegate and the Russian Ambassador. No two men in any age, perhaps, ever met to discuss matters in which the destinies of a larger part of mankind were more seriously involved. In the friendly intercourse of a social evening reception two of General Ignatieff's diplomatic colleagues suggested to him the thought of the streams of blood that the slightest misunderstanding, a hasty expression, any untoward form the discussion might take, especially at the outset of the Conference, would only too probably cause to be shed. The General instantly became grave and earnest, and said that, much as the confidence his Sovereign and his country reposed in him might gratify any man's ambition, the weight of the responsibility was almost more than he could bear. It was well that these two great men, in whom such extensive powers were vested, should come together in such a frame of mind. There were persons in Constantinople whose patriotism was a mixture of English prejudice and Turkish fanaticism, whom the bare mention of Russia and Ignatieff threw into

a fit of insanity, who were sure every word a Russian uttered was a falsehood, every smile and a snare. In the opinion of such as these, the result of the Conference was predetermined, the negotiations, they thought, would be broken up not only without having accomplished anything, but with hostile feelings aggravated on the side of England by the indignation arising from the vain attempt made to dupe her, on the part of Russia by her sense of the defeat all her wiles and her most treacherous devices would meet with. But at the Conference was to assemble under the influence of such ungenerous prepossessions, surely a herald and not a special delegate, would have been the proper person to be employed by England at the conference. I am not called upon to undertake the defence of Russia or to make myself a voucher for the sincerity and straightforwardness of her diplomatic efforts, but it seemed at the time difficult to deny that the position taken up by the Emperor Alexander in his speech and by Prince Gortschakoff in his circular was not only most clearly and positively defined but in every respect met, without in the least exceeding, the views often put forward by England in her treatment of the Eastern question. England and Russia had no cause — no ostensible cause, at least — for mutual enmity. They were, on the contrary, both equally interested in overcoming a common enemy, and that was Turkish evasion and obstinacy. The whole of Europe was storming at Turkey's door,

calling for such reforms in her administration as might render the condition of her subjects endurable, and put an end to a state of things which made the Ottoman Empire a scandal and a danger to civilised nations. The Turks admitted whatever was said on the score of their shortcomings, they agreed as to the necessity of mending their ways and inaugurating a new era of order and justice; but they insisted, or would have liked to insist, that this was merely a matter of home policy; that the European Powers had no right to interfere with it; that such interference would be a violation of existing treaties, an offence against the sovereign right and the independence of the Porte, and, in short, an abuse of power which the Ottoman Government would be entitled and which it was determined to resist *à outrance*. Whether this alleged resolution of the Sublime Porte would be as firm as we were given to understand, supposing it had to be made good against the unanimous will of all the Powers, especially of England and Russia, was a point which an actual experiment alone could decide. In my opinion, all the infatuation and stubbornness of Turkey rested on the conceit people had at Constantinople of the impossibility of a cordial understanding between England and Russia. Nay, their confidence arose from the conviction that it was always easy for the Porte to pit the two Powers one against the other, and find in the one support and countenance to resist the other's pressure. It

was by no means difficult for Lord Salisbury and General Ignatieff, if, as it was to be hoped, they were penetrated with sufficient mutual regard and trust, on their first meeting at once to undeceive the Turks in this respect.

The point at issue between the Porte and Europe was not so much to define what institutions might best suit the conditions and wants of the motley and hybrid population of the Ottoman Empire, as to determine what sureties or guarantees should be exacted from the Porte that the announcement of those institutions would not prove as egregious a delusion as all previous engagements of the Porte to the same effect had invariably turned out to be. The men in power at Constantinople allowed nakedly that all promises of reforms most solemnly entered into by the Porte were hitherto only made to be broken : but they imputed the blame of this breach of faith to the corrupt government of the late Grand Vizier, Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, and to the baneful influence exercised over him by General Ignatieff. But the truth is that the evil was of old date, and that of all the Firmans, Irades, and other decrees ever promulgated, either under the reign of the weak Abd-ul-Medjid or in the early and hopeful years of Abd-ul-Aziz, not a tittle was ever carried into execution, whether they concerned slavery and the slave-trade, the fair assessment and humane collection of tithes and taxes, the admission of the Christians into the ranks of the army, or any other

measure tending to relieve the people's sufferings. The proofs of this must have been laid before the public to little purpose for a whole twelvemonth, if the bare-faced ill-faith of the Porte to its subjects in every instance was not by this time manifest to English readers. The Turks told us now that a cure for this evil would be found in Midhat's Constitution, with its Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, its universal suffrage, and other wonders, and they felt sure that the equal rights and liberties ushered in by this new charter would require no foreign guarantee, as they would be sufficiently safeguarded and vindicated by the people in their own interest and by their own strength. But the total apathy and supineness, or else the sneers of incredulity with which people of all classes received the tidings, showed the spirit with which they looked forward to a promised boon of which they either little understood the value, or of which experience had taught them to mistrust the reality. Positively, unless the Ottoman Government was to be allowed to deal with its subjects as it best suited it, it was necessary that the Powers should at the outset come to a very clear understanding as to the nature of the guarantees to be exacted from the Porte; whether supervision should be exercised through an international commission, or whether their wishes had to be enforced by a joint occupation of some of the provinces. One of the points, for instance, which was sure to come on for discussion at the outset of



the Conference—indeed, the very first and foremost—was the disarmament of the Mussulman population—at least in the northern provinces. The Porte would, of course, plead the impracticability of such a measure, the great irritation it must needs give rise to, the fearful dangers it might involve. Only a clear intimation from all the Powers, and especially from England and Russia, that the thing must be done at once, and thoroughly done, might wrest a reluctant consent and deceitful promise from the Porte; but to obtain a real promise and its fulfilment, to silence all opposition, to remove all alleged obstacles and perils, to see that the disarmament was not merely a make-believe, a mockery, and an insult to those who demanded it, was a matter which would require the presence of a foreign force, and this would have to be supplied by one or more of the Powers, with the consent of all the others. By whatever means it might have to be effected, but it is remembered that without a general disarmament the social condition of the northern provinces as well as of other parts of the empire will be, as it has always been, a mere reign of terror, the unarmed Christian cowering before the armed Mussulman, as if the very breath in his nostrils were not his own.

Lord Salisbury and General Ignatieff had the desired interview, and it was understood that they were well satisfied with each other and with the views both took of the various problems of which

they were to seek the solution. The matter, however, was not altogether as smooth as it appeared on the surface, and it soon became manifest that there was a screw loose somewhere. Independently of the predilections Sir Henry Elliot had contracted by long residence among the Turks, he would have been both more and less than man if his feelings had not been hurt by the resolution taken by her Majesty's Government to place another agent above him as their chief representative at the Conference, exposing him to the sarcasm of *Punch*, who represented Lord Derby as bidding him (Elliot) to "stand aside," as he would put in "a stronger man" for the wrestling match. Wiser would it have been for Lord Derby to recall his Ambassador under any pretext, and with every imaginable demonstration of honour, and send Lord Salisbury either alone, or with no matter what other attendant, than seat the noble Marquis by the side of a colleague whose attendance in such a subordinate position would have been bitter humiliation to the most forgiving and high-minded man. The immediate result of this — was apparent on the very evening after the first meeting of the European Plenipotentiaries, December 23rd, when three English newspaper correspondents waited upon Lord Salisbury, and heard from him that his views had been favourably received by all the Christian members of the Conference, although he had perceived dissent on the part of his own English colleague. The correspondents, holding a consul

tion at the door of the hotel, decided that it would not be discreet to avail themselves of his lordship's remarks. Lord Salisbury's displeasure, however, found its way into the London paper - though through other channels than the *Times* - and it ought to have been clear to her Majesty's Government that, unless they had pre-empted the confusion and downfall of the Conference, it behoved them to bring into harmony their two agents, who if left to their own devices would go on as they had begun, *i.e.* crossing, embarrassing, and neutralising each other to the end. The Government however acted throughout as if their purpose had been not to heal but to widen the breach which yawned from the beginning between their two Plenipotentiaries, and at the very moment in which Lord Salisbury exerted his utmost energy to enforce his views upon the Turks, resorting to the strongest language to overcome their pride and stubbornness, Mulhat received secret hints from the Ottoman Embassy in London to the effect that "he needed not attend to Lord Salisbury's advice or heed his threats, as the special Delegate did not know the mind of the men at the head of the English Cabinet, who were his lordship's secret enemies, Lord Beaconsfield from personal, Lord Derby from domestic, motives." After that it was of course very evident that the Conference was doomed from the beginning, and that Diplomacy was here playing a comedy which unfortunately was only too sure to end in tragedy.

The arrogance and obstinacy of the Porte grew stronger with every glimpse it obtained of the hesitation and inconsistency of the English Government, and there was no lack of zealous Turkophiles ready to din into the ears of the Turks that, however the words of John Bull might sound, his heart was still in the right place, faithful to its old alliance with the Ottoman, and jealous of the aggrandisement of the Muscovite. Was not the fleet anchored at Besika Bay, and had not the order which sent it there been a clever stroke of policy, intended as a demonstration of goodwill to Turkey, and of defiance to her enemy? Whatever had been said of the original cause of the presence of the fleet at Besika was either easily forgotten or boldly denied; the fleet was there, not to protect the Christians, but to countenance the Turks, and the conceit of its mission there waxed so strong and became so deep-rooted that Lord Salisbury decided, though only too late, to have it removed from that very irksome anchorage, and sent to the Piræus. Lord Beaconsfield's words also, as I have hinted, could not fail to spread dismay among those who wished for a pacific solution of the Eastern question, and inspired with a rash, however illusory, confidence, those Turks and Turkophiles who flattered themselves that England would in all events fight for and abet Turkey in her evil courses. More alarming still than the Prime Minister's words appeared the Government's doings, if people interpreted as such the presence both at Constantinople and at

Employment of several British officers of the Royal Engineers, whose business was supposed to be to fortify the environs of the Ottoman capital on the land side, as well as to extend the works of the great Armenian fortress. The Turks were so greatly emboldened by these symptoms of England's warlike disposition, that not to be behindhand they for their own part, towards the middle of November, ordered out their ironclad squadron, proposing to send it to Burgas, on the Black Sea; but as these were the days in which everything was being arranged for the Conference, even Sir Henry Elliot was discreet enough to discountenance a too open demonstration of hostility to Russia, and it was by the prudent counsel of the English Ambassador, so instructed by his Government, that the Turks desisted from that vain bravado, and were satisfied with placing their men-of-war in celadons along the Upper Bosphorus up to its opening between Buyukdere and the Giant Mountain.

The one great and decisive point that presented itself before the Constantinople Conference at its very first sitting was the same which always has and always will puzzle any statesman venturing to meddle with the Eastern question. In presence of the fact that the Turks are in Europe, and that their Government is an outrage to European civilisation, are the European Powers entitled to drive that Government from Europe, or to put down that Government; or must they be satisfied with civilising and human-

ising, Europeanising it? And if, as is only too evident, reforms are needed in Turkey, must the Powers limit their action to point out and strongly recommend those reforms, or are they justified in, at all hazards, enforcing it? We had here a question of coercion or no coercion. Russia from the beginning declared that she looked upon that *ultima ratio* as an eventual necessity. The Emperor Alexander declared it frankly and emphatically at Moscow. England did not reveal her mind quite as distinctly at that period; she only stood up for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but she intended that it should be reconciled with the improvement of the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte; she never said what should be done should all attempts to bring about that improvement by pacific means prove a failure.

In that divergence of views between the two great Powers the Turks saw their own security. "Why should the Conference meddle with the internal policy of the Ottoman Government?" Such was the outcry raised in favour of the Sublime Porte by those who professed themselves its best friends, and they vindicated its right to do with its subjects as it pleased by a variety of what they thought unanswerable arguments. In the first place they said "the Turks are not half so black as they are painted; in the second place, bad as the Turks may be, the Christians are in every respect infinitely worse; in the third place, the Turks are fully as ill-governed

as the Christians. Then, well or ill as the Christians may be governed, there is no discontent among them; they raise no complaint and attempt no revolt, unless it be at the instigation of treacherous neighbours. Finally, even if they had reason to wish for a change, even if they aspired to self-government, they would be utterly unfitted for it by their baseness and corruption, by their ignorance and savagery, and, above all things, by their implacable, mutual jealousies and rancours of race and creed." As none of the nationalities of the Ottoman Empire could supersede the Turks in the Government, the advocates concluded that the Turkish rule must continue, whether it admitted of improvement or whether it did not.

Fallacious as the reasoning was, it had something specious about it. The purely conquering race in Turkey, the Osmanli, are, or were originally, a respectable community. On the other hand, the Eastern Christians, be they Greeks, Slavs, or Armenians, are a debased race, and not remarkable for charity or tolerance towards one another. But all, both Turks and Christians, are precisely such as the government of the last four centuries has made them, and the Turks, as the ruling race, are responsible for their government. The Turks are a good-natured and truth-telling people, and the Greeks whom they conquered had 400 years ago a bad name, which still clings to them; but the Turks made no attempts to acquire high intellectual

qualities, which the Greeks, in the midst of all their corruption, possessed. The Turks never really governed the Greeks, and never dealt with them as men with men. They shrank from contact and amalgamation, and were at no pains to conceal their contempt. With the Giaour of Europe, as with the believer of Syria and Arabia, the Osmanli maintained a proud distance, which precluded every possibility of fraternisation.

The Turk may not in most instances have been unjust or ungenerous, but he followed no other rule than his own impulse. He was a warrior by instinct, and monopolised the soldier's business. He did no other manner of work. He neither spun nor wove. He delved only a little, and was an indifferent sailor. All the industry and trade of the land was left to the subject races. The Turk claimed his right to the soil ; but for the rest, in all remunerative pursuits and even in the drudgery of the Government, he was dependent on the Christians, on their brains, on their sinews, on the tithes and taxes he levied on them. The Turk was the drone in the Ottoman hive. The consequences were such as might have been anticipated. Long periods of peace came ; the soldier's trade became unproductive. The military caste dwindled ; it lost wealth, energy, and reputation, while the subject races, in spite of oppression, thrived, increased, and multiplied by their toil. The scorn of the Mussulman for his Christian drudge was gradually changed into envy, and even into fear.



It was the story of the Egyptian and Israelite all over again. A monopoly of the most lucrative Government offices enabled a few hundred Pashas, Valis, etc., to enrich themselves at the public expense; but for the rest, the race of the primitive feudal lords and great landowners who came in with the conquerors became extinct, and there was no agricultural or commercial Mussulman middle class to take their place. The time came when Mussulman sloth began to be afraid of Giaour thrift and development, and like all other improvident rulers, under the influence of terror, the Turks sought their safety in a reign of terror. They terrorised the Bulgarians by settling gangs of wild Circassian robbers among them. And they equally terrorised the Armenians by subjecting them to the predatory incursions of Koordish and other savage hordes.

There never was a time when the good and bad qualities of the Turks and the Turkish Government were made the theme of more violent and almost insane controversies than during the sitting of the Constantinople Conference. But instead of an answer to the charges that were brought against Turkey, the argument too generally resolved itself into a retort against Russia. Good Protestant clergymen, for instance, proclaimed throughout the world, that "while no proselytism in Russia is allowed, in Turkey there has been perfect liberty of missionary work for 300 years." It was added, however, that in Turkey "every kind of proselytism is

allowed except from Mohammedanism to Christianity, and the mere attempt at such proselytism was, till England interfered, death both to the convert and the converter, and as we saw in the case of Salonica it still involves the danger of it." Mohammedanism is as jealous and ferocious a creed as any other, only it has none of that expansive charity which inclines Christianity to proselytism, and it is scorn for all other human beings that prompts the Turk to allow Christians of all sects and denominations to go, as he thinks, to perdition their own way, and to poach on each other's preserves as they best can ; only the "State religion" must not be touched, and one would fain ask in what the policy of the Porte in this respect differs from that of the Russian or even of the late Papal Government. The creed of Islam is theoretically so simple and pure, and it is fenced round with such strong penal precautions, that the Mussulman, feeling sure that the Giaour would not even dare to cast a glance within the well-guarded fold of his believer's flock, looks with contemptuous amusement at the scuffle for souls by which the missionaries of the various Christian denominations disturb the very peace of the sanctuary. Were the Christians in Turkey less hopelessly blinded by their sectarian animosities, they would resent this scornful tolerance of the Turks as the greatest insult. Had they any manliness left among them, they would feel their exclusion from military service as the deepest degradation. Be it borne in mind that one of the

strongest arguments resorted to by the advocates of the Ottoman Government is not so much the excellence of the Turks as the utter baseness and depravity of the Christians, their unfitness for any better rule above all things, then incapacity, their unfitness for self-government. The Turks, one would say, have been for 400 years maturing their subjects, but the work is not quite done yet, and the "upening" process must go on for an indefinite course of years. This is what used to be said of the Lombards under Austria, of the Greeks, Roumanians, and Servians under the Porte. They were mere children, too tender and helpless to be trusted out of leading-strings; and would men now talk of self-government for Bosnians and Bulgarians? Could those mere savages of the Balkans or those mere boons of the Danube be left for one day to themselves without flying at each other's throats, without tyrannising over one another more harshly than the Turks ever tyrannised over any of them, and, what is worse, without falling all and each of them into the hands of far more tyrannical Russia?

Be it observed that this was not merely the mode of reasoning of the Turks or of the Turks' friends. It was the argument of a considerable party among the Christian subjects of the Porte themselves, whose jealousy of race or of creed was alarmed at the prospect of the emancipation of their fellow-sufferers, and who, seeing little immediate chance of an improvement in their own condition, longed

for what is called the "consolation of lost souls." This may explain the petitions addressed by some of the Christian communities, through their ecclesiastical superiors, to the Porte, showing that the autonomy, or reforms, privileges, and immunities to be, on the proposal of the European Powers, bestowed on the Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, would, if granted, have been fraught with danger to the empire, as they would have seemed a reward to rebel subjects or disloyal vassals for their undutifulness, and an encouragement to the discontented of other races and creeds to break the peace, seeking the same end by the same violent means, instead of trusting to the spontaneous magnanimity of their beloved Sultan for the redress of such grievances as might really exist. It would have been unjust and unreasonable, I think, to find fault with the Greek or the Armenian pleading his own cause and advocating his own interest—if indeed such petitions were not, as it was natural to presume, drawn up at the Turks' suggestion to play into the hands of the Government and supply it with arguments to meet the proposals of the Powers and defeat the object of the Conference. But it would certainly have seemed to be the best policy of all the subjects of the Sultan to allow the Bosnians and other Slavs to get whatever might be in store for them, holding their peace till the reforms in those northern provinces had been carried out, when it would have been the proper time for the other provinces to urge their own

claims, either as a recompense for their fidelity or upon any other grounds and by any other means which might bring the Porte to hear reason. A dog-in-the-manger policy, by which one race or creed seemed to grudge the good which might befall other creeds or races, suggested the idea that the dissensions were too incurable to allow the hope that the interference of the Powers could be attended by favourable results.

It might be observed, however, that the staunchest Christian supporters of Turkish rule, the most zealous champions of Ottoman independence, the most uncompromising foes to all European interference were not Ottoman subjects. The Levantine "hat-wearers"—*i.e.*, natives or permanent residents of the country, enjoying the protection of a foreign state—had no sympathy with their fez-wearing fellow-countrymen, the Rayahs, or immediate subjects of the Porte. As strangers in the land, as born or naturalised Britons, Germans, Greeks, or Italians, these Levantines were exempt from many of the Turkish taxes, unamenable to Turkish jurisdiction, unaffected by Turkish laws or decrees, the freest, the happiest of men. Many of them were engaged in speculations, the success of which rested on the stability of the Government, and often on the perpetuation of its worst abuses, while others were dependent on its patronage, received its pay, or looked to it for preferment. For them, especially when they had feathered their own nest, the Turkish

world was the best of all possible worlds, or, if it was not, if they were brought to confess that the Government was not faultless, that it was a mass of corruption and needed reform, they contended either that reform was impracticable, or that it was at hand—that the Government would mend itself only if it was left to its own devices, and not interfered with lectured, or bullied.

On the 15th of December, that is, five days before the solemn opening of the Conference at Tershaneh, an event occurred which left little doubt as to the probable termination of the labours of the assembled diplomatists. Mehemet Rushdi was dismissed from the Grand Vizierate, and Midhat Pasha took his place. - This man, whom all the sympathy felt for his subsequent misfortunes cannot clear from the imputation of acting at this juncture as an ambitious but shallow political charlatan, had been, even in a subordinate capacity, the very head of the Government springing from the May revolution, and it was from him that from the first came the opposition of the Porte to the calling together of a Conference. Midhat thought, or at least said, that the business of the Conference should have been the settlement of the differences between the Porte and the principalities of Servia and Montenegro, and that its mission should go no further. Even in this respect he contended that the negotiations would have to be based on the Treaty of 1856; but, with respect to any reforms to be introduced into Bosnia, Herzego-

claims, either as a recompense for their fidelity or upon any other grounds and by any other means which might bring the Porte to hear reason. A dog-in-the-manger policy, by which one race or creed seemed to grudge the good which might befall other creeds or races, suggested the idea that the dissensions were too incurable to allow the hope that the interference of the Powers could be attended by favourable results.

It might be observed, however, that the staunchest Christian supporters of Turkish rule, the most zealous champions of Ottoman independence, the most uncompromising foes to all European interference were not Ottoman subjects. The Levantine "hat-wearers"—*i.e.*, natives or permanent residents of the country, enjoying the protection of a foreign state—had no sympathy with their fez wearing fellow-countrymen, the Rayahs, or immediate subjects of the Porte. As strangers in the land, as born or naturalised Britons, Germans, Greeks, or Italians, these Levantines were exempt from many of the Turkish taxes, unamenable to Turkish jurisdiction, unaffected by Turkish laws or decrees, the freest, the happiest of men. Many of them were engaged in speculations, the success of which rested on the stability of the Government, and often on the perpetuation of its worst abuses, while others were dependent on its patronage, received its pay, or looked to it for preferment. For them, especially when they had feathered their own nest, the Turkish

world was the best of all possible worlds, or, if it was not, if they were brought to confess that the Government was not faultless, that it was a mass of corruption and needed reform, they contended either that reform was impracticable, or that it was at hand—that the Government would mend itself only if it was left to its own devices, and not interfered with lectured, or bullied.

On the 18th of December, that is, five days before the solemn opening of the Conference at Tershaneh, an event occurred which left little doubt as to the probable termination of the labours of the assembled diplomatists. Mehmet Rushdi was dismissed from the Grand Vizierate, and Midhat Pasha took his place. - This man, whom all the sympathy felt for his subsequent misfortunes cannot clear from the imputation of acting at this juncture as an ambitious but shallow political charlatan, had been, even in a subordinate capacity, the very head of the Government springing from the May revolution, and it was from him that from the first came the opposition of the Porte to the calling together of a Conference. Midhat thought, or at least said, that the business of the Conference should have been the settlement of the differences between the Porte and the principalities of Servia and Montenegro, and that its mission should go no further. Even in this respect he contended that the negotiations would have to be based on the Treaty of 1856; but, with respect to any reforms to be introduced into Bosnia, Herzego-



vina, and Bulgaria, the treaty itself precluded even the possibility of any proposal or discussion. "Can it be for one moment supposed," he reasoned, "that Turkey, which had at this very crisis given so striking a proof of her vitality, by its defeat of the Servians, would ever consent that foreign Powers should directly or indirectly meddle with anything that in any way concerned her home administration?" Turkey, he went on, might listen with forbearance to the proposals of the Powers, but she would flatly reject any of them which might in the slightest degree affect her independent sovereignty. The ninth Article of the Treaty of Paris was drawn up for the very purpose of securing that independence: and it was the deliberate act of wise statesmen, he insisted, who well knew that the less the internal affairs of a country are interfered with, the greater will be the development of its order and prosperity. It would not be right, therefore, it would not be expedient, that the Powers should presume to advocate the cause of the Porte's subjects against the Porte; and what is more, the Porte would not put up with such advocacy.

It was with these views that Midhat, who, at the opening of the Conference had refused to be one of the Ottoman Plenipotentiaries, because he foresaw that his accession to the supreme power would soon become inevitable, now tripped up the old Grand Vizier, and took upon himself the management of the diplomatic as well as of all other business of the empire. Mehemet Rushdi had never evinced great

rich in the Milliat Constitution, and the new Grand Vizier had arranged everything to prepare for that epoch-making day of the 23rd of December, which opened the session of the cannon announcing the promulgation of the Ottoman charter at the Porte to be kept open till midnight at the very moment it was closed for the first time at Tershanah to take into its hands the reformation of the Ottoman Empire. "What is the use," that tested argument seemed to ask, "of your botching and tinkering about autonomous local reforms for some few of your pet provinces? Here is the yamasa for all the disorders of Turkey. Here are liberty and equality and all the blessings of a liberal government assured for every part of the empire," and if any one ventured to suggest that the New Charter might turn out as great a disappointment to the Hays and Trades of former times, Mevlad answered by answering with the words of twice-born King Randa to his Minister Poerio, as he came forth to seal his oath to the Constitution, *in is the right way, in is the proper government of the empire.*"

A Government was now in power in Turkey which would say that it meant, to be this time as good as its word, and even pleaded the Constitution as an argument to reject all the demands of the Powers, for Milliat declared that "even had the Sultan given his assent, that assent would be null and void without the ratification of the chambers"—those chambers which were not yet in being.

There is no doubt that the proclamation of that

character, the idea that the Sultan and his Government were in earnest, that they were entitled to delay their trial, and should be allowed some months, or years' respite, staggered many persons. Sir Henry Elliot said in that Conference that before one set aside the new institutions of the empire it was advisable to see how they would turn out. But towards the end of the year the collapse of the Conference appeared inevitable, and the local press levelled against the Conference, and especially against Lord Salisbury, in a language breathing all kinds, not only of moderation but of desecy. The population of the European Provinces, which originally consisted of eleven points, was reduced to ten, the executive to an International Committee charged with watching the Ottoman Government, and in the three provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, though the Conference asserted that it should be "carefully deprived of executive authority," and the appointment of Vukas or governors of those same provinces which was to be left to the Sultan, but which required the unanimous approval of the Powers, and was to endure for a stipulated number of years, a fixed tenure of office which had been tried in the province of Lebanon with good effect. Even this contemptible minimum of reforms was rejected by the Porte as derogatory to the independent sovereignty of the Sultan, and sanctioning the interference of the Powers in the domestic administration of the empire.

Lord Salisbury, who saw that there was nothing more to be done with the Government, made a last effort on the 14th of January, when he asked for and obtained a private interview with the Sultan. He had already seen his Majesty on the 10th of the previous month, not long after his arrival, and had received a less favourable impression of his personal appearance than was made by the Padishah upon some persons, among others upon Mr. Layard. Lord Salisbury said at the time, that "the young Sovereign had a somewhat sad, careworn look, and his appearance was that of a man considerably older than the *Almanach de Gotha* made him." On his second visit he found him "too helpless and nervous, too hopelessly a prey to a variety of fears, to be capable of independent thought or action." He was evidently under the thumb of Midhat who, upon his assumption to the Grand Vizierate, set no limits to his arrogance and gave offence, not only to a party powerful in the Sultan's palace, but to the Sultan personally, thereby preparing for himself that ignominious expulsion from power which startled the world less than two months after. In his own meek and submissive manner, Abd-ul-Hamid assured Lord Salisbury that "he was himself anxious for peace, and the proposals of the Powers seemed to him most reasonable, but that he was a Constitutional Sovereign, and his judgment must be subordinate to the will of his Ministers."

All was now over, and nothing remained to be

done except to let the audience find out that it was a noble play, at least worth watching, skilful and decency, but even that was not to be. It was decided at the various European Courts that their displeasure at the silliness of the Porte should be conveyed to it by the simultaneous departure of all the ministers of the Conference, improving the recall both of the Delegates and of the ordinary Ambassadors resident in Constantinople. Salvet Pasha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who together with Elhiz Pasha, his colleague at the Conference, had earned his disrepute as an actor to absent himself from the meeting at which the protocol of the last sitting was by appointment to be signed, had a sneer ready for them at their last visit, and asked them, "But, gentlemen, what do you (the resident Ambassadors) go away for?" A question which he repeated when some of them reappeared before him a few months later, saying with the same ingenuous smile, "But gentlemen, what do you come back for?"

It had been decided that a proof should be given of the unanimity with which the Powers had proceeded throughout the Conference, and of the harmony which still reigned at its close, by ordering the departure of the Plenipotentiaries to be simultaneous and immediate. The winter storms raged however so tremendously on the waters, and especially on the Black Sea, that although Lord Salisbury managed to embark on the 24th, on board the Austrian Lloyd's

steamer *Ceres* and to leave in the morning for Athens and Brindisi, General Ignatieff had to wait three days before the imperial yacht *Eurykliki*, which was to take him to Odessa, could leave the harbour; and even then he had to change his route and go *via* Trieste. He set out on Saturday, and the French, German, Austrian, and Italian Delegates had to put off their voyage till Monday and Tuesday.

Sir Henry Elliot left on Thursday the 26th, but either himself or the English Government took care that his departure should be ascribed to some special motive apart from the exit of the other members of the Conference, and it was asserted that his recall was only temporary, consequent on a leave of absence asked for and obtained by him some time before from motives of ill health. The valedictory addresses which he received from the English colony at Pera Galata, and from the various religious denominations of Armenians, all expressed their "unfeigned sorrow that, in the execution of a most arduous duty, his strength had been over-taxed," and "his health devotedly sacrificed in the fulfilment of a most responsible trust." The English address was after long deliberation purposely so framed as to pronounce no opinion on the Ambassador's political conduct, as many of the most influential persons refused to give their signature on any other conditions. It went no farther than a vindication of his "personal character," which nobody



impugned his sound judgment. To say that he withheld some financial information to speculate on the Bourse, would have been a "reflection on his personal character," but on this Sir Henry required no defence, as nobody was ever so silly as even to hint at such misconduct on his part except Mr. Hamond, who however almost in the same breath withdrew the absurd charge. In his answers to the various addresses Sir Henry Elliot complained that he "had been erroneously represented in some quarters as indifferent to the interests and welfare of the Christians in Turkey," he "was gratified to observe that there was now manifested in all directions, and to an extent hitherto unknown, a spirit of concord, of union, he might almost say of fraternity, between Mussulmans and Christians in the Turkish dominions, which feeling would, he hoped, further expand and strengthen." And he "trusted when he saw them again in a few months, he should find a great improvement in the condition of the country."

The Ambassador was evidently in good faith, and could only be charged with error of judgment, the only accusation that ever was brought against him. He really believed in the improvable nature of the Ottoman Government, "now fully recognising the necessity of institutions which would ensure respect for the rights of all." He had faith in the Midhat Constitution, and faith in Midhat, with whom he had very long interviews during, as well as before and after the Conference, and whose obstinacy he,



as it is natural to presume in pursuit of his own ultra-Turkophile views, countenanced and encouraged, thereby defeating *all* the purpose of Lord Salisbury's mission, but, consciously or not, seconding the intention *of* her Majesty's Ministers who in all probability wished that mission to fail.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE OTTOMAN CONSTITUTION.

MIDHAT'S EARLY VIEWS.—HIS LATER VIEWS.—USES AND PURPOSES OF A NATIONAL CHARTER.—MIDHAT'S NATIONAL COUNCIL.—HIS CONSTITUTION.—FALL OF MIDHAT.—OPENING OF THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT.—AHMED VEFIK.—CHARACTER AND TRANSACTIONS OF THE OTTOMAN PARLIAMENT.—MUSSULMANS AND NON-MUSSULMANS.

LORD SALISBURY'S mission had failed, and John Bull, in *Punch*, very wisely wondered "what he had been sent to Constantinople for?" His lordship had himself explained that the object of his Eastward journey was "to prevent, if possible, the outbreak of a war between Turkey and Russia, and at the same time to improve the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte." His endeavours to keep the peace, as it was apparent from the upshot of the Conference, and as subsequent events proved, were unavailing. But with respect to the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire, the noble Marquis was more successful than he expected, or even wished, for the Conference only proposed reforms, and the result was a Constitution.

There is little doubt that for any good the Con-

situation may ever develop, the Sultan's subjects will have to consider themselves indebted to the Conference. At the time of his retirement from the Cabinet of Mehmed Nizamiyeh Sultan Abdul Aziz Medhat's aspirations had not soared so high as a National Council in direct control of a few scores of members, and a responsibility of the Minister intended to establish soon, check on the arbitrary will of the Sovereign was all he then would have ventured to propose. After the downfall of Abdul Aziz, and upon his accession to power as member of the Mehmed Rushdi Cabinet, first as Minister without portfolio, and then as President of the Council Medhat managed over the models of French, Italian, and Spanish charters, and laid out what he deemed applicable to Turkey as a scheme of representative Government. His scheme however met with little favour from some of his colleagues, and it was in consequence of this disagreement that early in August an official communication appeared in the Turkish papers, directing the *politi* and the *Bureau de la Presse* to forbid all discussion in public or private meetings of subjects connected with those Constitutional reforms which had been announced in the *Hatt* by which Sultan Murad had inaugurated his reign, declaring that all persons allowing themselves such discussions were to be arrested and dealt with as guilty of high treason. The reasons for this severe measure were that "the administrative reforms now contemplated demanded deep study and researches,

with a view to ensure their consistency with the prescription of sacred laws, and with the customs and usages, as well as with the fitness of the people for such institutions, and that the Government, under the pressure of present events, had little leisure to turn their attention to such subjects." The Ottoman Constitution was that which at that moment seemed best to interest Ottoman thinkers and writers. Every imaginable allusion to the subject in the newspapers had ceased, the matter being left entirely and exclusively in the hands of the Government. By a vote of the Council of Ministers, attended by a large number of notables, Midhat Pasha had been commissioned to prepare a draught of the intended reforms. Midhat's draught was soon ready, and was handed to the Grand Vizier for approval, previous to its being submitted to the Council for acceptance. The Grand Vizier, aware of the irreconcilable divisions existing on this subject in the Cabinet, seemed determined to leave the matter in abeyance. Meanwhile the conflicting parties in the Cabinet—the Liberal, or Midhat party, and the Conservative party, headed by the Sheikh ul-Islam—were battling between themselves, the Conservatives declaring that the discussion of political subjects at a moment when Ottoman soldiers were confronting the enemies of the country would only excite popular passions, to the detriment of military operations, and to the encouragement of the designs of evil-minded persons; and the Liberals contending that, on the contrary,

the prospect of an early fulfilment of the Sovereign's promises would rally round the throne all patriots throughout the empire, and win the respect and sympathy of all nations interested in seeing Turkey advancing in the path of progress, and deserving by her institutions the place that ought to belong to her among civilised communities.

The before-mentioned decree, forbidding political discussions, seemed to reveal a preponderance of the Conservative Pashas in the Cabinet, and a disinclination on the part of the Grand Vizier to accede to Midhat's views, and it was at the desire of Midhat himself that at that very time Kemal Bey, Midhat's friend, destined to be involved in his fall, and now a political prisoner in Stamboul gaol, came to me, and read a draught of the projected Constitution, with a request that I should give it the utmost publicity, that English readers might satisfy themselves that there was nothing in the institutions with which Midhat aspired to endow his country that need give rise to popular excitement or paralyse the energy of the army in the field against Servia and Montenegro. The Ottoman Constitution as then projected by Midhat only consisted of sixty-three articles, divided into seven chapters.

Months elapsed, and nothing was said about the great charter, the open war in the north and the financial distress throughout the country allowing little leisure for the discussion of innovations which to most sane persons appeared merely hypothetical

and Utopian. The expectation that Mehemet Rushdi was too old and of too retiring a disposition to remain long at his post as Grand Vizier was not realised, and Midhat had to wait to seize on the mere semblance of a power of which he in a great degree already enjoyed the substance. In fact, it was rumoured that his zeal for liberal institutions had abated with every step he made in the Cabinet, and that far from being in any hurry to carry his scheme into effect, he gladly listened to any objections that the Ulama and other sticklers for the "Sacred laws" urged against it, and even exaggerated the importance of these objections, and suggested some of his own. This is, at least, what I heard from Savas Pasha, then President of the Lyceum at Galata Serai, and now Governor-General at Rhodes, who came out to see me at Therapia, and expressed himself in very strong language about Midhat's insincerity.

But the Conference came, and was clamouring for reforms, and even drawing up the eleven points of what ought to constitute the autonomy of some of the provinces, and then the idea that the Midhat Constitution might be made to baffle, if not to satisfy, these alien demands gained ground, and the Grand Vizier himself was now almost brought to admit the wisdom of taking a leaf out of the book of his predecessor, Mahmoud Nedim Pasha—*i.e.* giving or pretending to give an ell where only an inch was asked, meeting the proposal of partial

reforms by a whole budget of general reforms, as had been done ever since the days of the Andrassy Note. The Grand Vizier however in all these matters was acting as a man convinced against his will. It was felt that he was in everybody's way, and the hope was that, like M. Thiers, he would threaten to resign once too often, and would in the end make room for Midhat, round whose neck his unfortunate Constitution would weigh like a stone, making his tenure of office almost an impossibility. All these predictions were only too literally realised.

Ever since Mehemet Rushdi's accession to the dignity of Grand Vizier, that worthy Pasha had endeavoured to secure the support of all parties by admitting as many men as he could to an equal share of the good things of the State. His policy consisted in having no policy of his own and in humouring other men's views without allowing them development or maturity. Himself a good, honest Turk of the old school, a Conservative, sufficiently advanced in age to hope that the Deluge would only come after his time, the Grand Vizier had been since the death of Hussein Avni Pasha at the greatest pains to oppose Midhat Pasha's new-fangled notions, and had succeeded in dismissing the subject, not by open discussion in Council, but simply by quietly thrusting Midhat's draught in his pocket, and putting off its examination upon the plea of the pressure of more urgent affairs. He at last

produced the draught in Council, when it became a theme for discussion both at the Porte and the Palace, when the Sultan, it is said, objected to the first chapter, intended to define the rights and prerogatives of the Sovereign, saying, "Am I not the Prophet? What need is there of any definition?" And the good Grand Vizier, the report again is, wondered how it was that "while he was most willing to acknowledge everybody's rights and liberties, people should show so much anxiety to curtail his own," the poor old Turk apparently finding it difficult to perceive why the sovereignty of the nation should be incompatible with the absolute power of the head of the Ministry.

Midhat however had for a long time excited the ambition of the well-meaning Sultan to become like one of the popular citizen-kings of the West, and the suggestion having been adroitly hazarded that Mehmet Rushdi was an obstacle to the accomplishment of the Sultan's wishes, the removal of the old Sadrazam presented no difficulty. As we learnt from the *Tarqee* on the 17th of December, Midhat had a three hours' interview with Sir Henry Elliot. That was on a Sunday, and on the following day Midhat had a long audience of the Sultan. On that same day the Grand Vizier, owing to a slight indisposition, was unable to go to the Sublime Porte. On Tuesday Midhat was installed as Grand Vizier. So far as the *Court Circular* accounted for the crisis, it appeared that a last interview had previously oc-



curred between the Sultan and Mehemet Rushdi, in which his Majesty insisted on the necessity of accepting the Midhat Constitution with those clauses constantly objected to by the Grand Vizier, which limited the authority of the Sovereign as well as the powers of his chief adviser. Mehemet Rushdi still argued that, however willing his Majesty might be to submit to the curtailment of his sovereign prerogative during his own reign, he had no right to sanction a compact which would be equally binding on his successors. The Sultan cut short the discussion by allowing the Grand Vizier an hour's time to reconsider the subject. The Grand Vizier made his bow and left the palace, but he had hardly reached his own residence before he was overtaken by the Sultan's messenger, and bidden to deliver up the great seal.

The triumph of Midhat and of the Midhat Constitution was thus accomplished, and the obstruction which frustrated the results of the Palace Revolution of May, 1876, was at last removed. The head of that revolution had been Midhat, as its right hand was Hussein Avni. What Midhat might have achieved had he at once then and there attained the supreme power we shall never know, but the rivalry between him and Hussein Avni rendered the temporary promotion of a moderate such as Mehemet Rushdi a matter of necessity, and for full six months the Constitutional scheme, which was to serve as a ladder for Midhat's ambition, was thwarted by the

obstinacy of the wary old man who was thus finally disposed of. The promulgation of that Constitution, which had long been imminent, had now become inevitable, and on the 21st of December many people crossed over from Pera to Stamboul, deceived by a false announcement that the ceremony of inauguration was to be held at two in the afternoon. But the new Grand Vizier, who could not conceal the fact that no man in Turkey - and himself less than any man - had faith in the practicability of his Constitution, still hesitated. The only use of that charter or organic statute at the present juncture was to supply the Porte with a pretext for rejecting the reforms proposed by the European Powers for the benefit of Bosnia and Bulgaria. "You wish to improve the condition of the Christian population of those provinces," the Turks argued; "but here is the *Midhat* Constitution, a remedy for the evils not only of these provinces, but of the whole empire, not only of the Christians, but of the Mussulmans also, ensuring full justice and perfect equality to all the Sultan's subjects, without distinction of race and creed." As now Turkey, however late, was willing to fulfil all the obligations contracted by former Hatts, Firmanis, and Irades, and stipulated in all the treaties, the interference of the Powers in her internal affairs had become superfluous, and would be resented and opposed by the Porte as a gratuitous piece of impertinence. It was in this language, we were told, that *Midhat* Pasha spoke, as

he returned the visits of the foreign diplomatists who congratulated him on his accession to power.

At last the 23d of December arose, a day memorable in the annals of the Turkish Empire. On that day at one o'clock, just as the Conference was holding its first plenary meeting at Terschichi, the Ottoman Constitution was officially read and promulgated at Stamboul, Midhat having so contrived everything that, while he intimated through his representatives to the diplomatic agents of the European Powers that their proposals were inadmissible and that the Porte would tolerate no foreign interference in her internal affairs, the 101 cannon from the other side of the Golden Horn should proclaim that the great act was consummated by which the Sultan had come to terms with his subjects—that the Ottoman nation was born at the same time and declared to be of age, and capable of managing its own affairs or fit for self-government.

Those who have followed the vicissitudes through which such countries as France, Spain, Italy, and Greece have gone of late years need only be told that the Ottoman Constitution is simply a bad copy of the various charters which have been or are on their trial throughout Europe, the copy being so contrived as to take whatever is bad, leaving out whatever is good in those very indifferent models. In the first place, the Sultan, besides being invested with the powers and prerogatives of all other Constitutional Sovereigns, retains the title of "Supreme

Caliph and Protector of the Mohammedan Religion," engaging to enforce the observance of the Cheri, or Sacred Law, which, whatever may be said to the contrary, is in diametrical opposition to any idea of equality between Mussulmans and non-Mussulmans, thus defeating the clause which declares that the Ottoman subjects are equal before the law, and have the same rights and duties towards their country *sans prejudice à ce qui concerne la religion*. In the second place, whatever may be said about ministerial responsibility, this does not concern the Grand Vizier, who, like the Sheik-ul-Islam, is appointed and retained or deposed by the Sultan at his own pleasure, and acts as a kind of *Maire du Palais*, absolute and irresponsible, arbitrarily and absolutely interfering with all the powers of the State, almost every act, either legislative or administrative, having to be submitted to him for his ultimate approval. For instance, if the Chamber of Deputies, finding fault with any act of any one Minister or of the whole Cabinet, of which the Grand Vizier is the head, declares by a majority of two-thirds of its members that the Minister or the Cabinet should be prosecuted before the High Court, not only are the Grand Vizier's person and office in no way impeachable, but the vote of the Chamber is laid before the Sultan—i.e. before the Grand Vizier—for approval, and the prosecution cannot be proceeded with without the sanction of an imperial decree. In the third place, although what are called the "fundamental rights"

of the subject—freedom of the press, of the press, of creed and worship, the right of association and petition, inviolability of domicile and property, and, in one word, all the liberties belonging to civilised nations—are simply vouchsafed to all Ottoman subjects, all these rights are simply stated in the abstract, and reference is made for their development to laws which are yet to be passed. No fewer than twenty-five such laws are enumerated, either because no provisions for the definition and regulation of what in other communities is considered man's birth-right were ever thought of before, or because, if anything was ever done with that view, the *Firman*s or *Irads* which were meant to fill up the want of such legislation were never carried out, and remained a dead letter from the outset. We are not told whether the twenty-five laws by which the organic statute is to be supplemented are to be issued *en bloc* by the Sultan's Government, or whether they are to be elaborated by the people through their representatives, but this is certain, that if the work is to be left to a Parliament, many sessions must pass before Turkey can be endowed with even the very rudiments of a liberal political jurisprudence.

The Legislature of the Ottoman Empire is to consist of two Chambers—an Upper House or Senate, whose members are appointed for life by the Sultan, and will receive an annual income of £T.1200; and a Lower House, or Chamber of Deputies, elected by universal suffrage on the basis of one Deputy

for every 50,000 of the male population. The number of the Senators must not exceed one-third of that of the Deputies. These latter receive an indemnity for their travelling expenses, besides £T.200 for the four months' Session. The Legislature lasts four years. Among the silly regulations imposed by a servile imitation of French and other charters, there are provisions that a quorum should consist of one-half of the House, that a Senator should not be less than forty years old, and a Deputy not less than thirty, and similar pedantries, having no ground on any plausible principle, but throwing endless practical delays and hindrances in the way of actual legislative business. The worst of it all however is that the Parliament, as here constituted, has no real initiative whatever. It is for the Ministers to bring in the bills for the approval of the Chambers; for although both the Senate and the Lower House may move for a new law or the modification of an old one, their proposal has to be submitted to the Grand Vizier and the Sultan, by whom, if they think proper, *sil y a lieu*, it is passed over to the Council of State, where it is elaborated, and thus becomes a Government bill. The only function of importance devolving on the Parliament is the control which they exercise over the public revenue and expenditure; but even this boon is unavailing in a State in which public accounts are only made up four years after the actual close of the application of each Budget—that is, long after any chance of

taking the Government to task for an improper disposal of the public money has passed away and been lost.

I have said that paper Constitutions such as the one before me work far from satisfactorily in France, Italy, and other countries, although these possess the inestimable advantages of homogeneity of national character, unity of race and language, advanced civilisation and the long established practice of a civil law. What must be the result of the introduction of such institutions into Turkey, a country in which the whole religious and political organisation has had hitherto no other tendency than to keep its many various races asunder, to foster their prejudices, and deepen their rancours by the incessant recollection of original grievances and by the perpetuation of galling disabilities? The Senate is to spring from direct Government nomination—*i.e.* it will be appointed in obedience to Mohammedan predilections. The Lower House will be elected by the population of the whole empire, where the Mussulmans still constitute a large majority, and where the administration as now organised—*i.e.* almost wholly under Mohammedan supremacy—will exercise an almost irresistible influence. Even in the House of Deputies the Mussulmans will prevail by numbers, to say nothing of the ascendancy which the long habit of command gives them over their cringing and cowering Christian fellow-subjects. Were not that enough, the

ruling race would be able to thwart any measure to which it might object in the Upper House, without whose sanction no bill sent up from the House of Deputies can become law. Add to this that no man is eligible for the Chamber, that no man can be appointed to a public office, without a knowledge of the Turkish language. How deep that knowledge may now be we are not told, for it is enacted that four years hence no one can be a Deputy unless he can read and, as much as possible—" *autant que possible* "—write the official language. Now we all know that Turkish is an extremely difficult language, and that although a little smattering of it is common enough throughout the empire, especially among the lowest classes, a real knowledge of it is extremely rare, not only among the Christians of the European provinces and the capital, but even among the Mussulmans of Syria, Arabia, and other Asiatic regions. Language there is no doubt is the main bond of union in our days for nations aspiring to self-government; and in Turkey, were there no other difficulty, merely to make Turkish the common medium for Parliamentary or even forensic intercourse is a task of which Midhat seems never to have estimated the magnitude, and the fulfilment of which would exceed any man's powers. Nor is that all, for I have no space to comment on the vast scheme of reform to be introduced into the judicial power, the finances, the provincial administration, with the creation of a High Court of Justice and Ex-



chequer Court, etc. Without considering whether or not such measures would be the very best possible ones, the men to carry them into execution are yet to be born in this country.

But, whatever may be the merits or demerits of the Constitution, no one can deny that its promulgation turned out a miserable failure. The Sultan, being slightly indisposed, disappointed the expectation of those who reckoned on his attendance. The hour of the performance of the ceremony was not clearly determined. I was there at one o'clock, and all was over, although the carriages of many of the high functionaries who ought to have been on the spot were toiling up the steep road from the bridge after me. The rain was pelting heavily all the time, and hardly a soul was to be seen in the streets or in the broad space environing the chumasy building of the Porte where the great act had just been performed. Sheltering as they could under the porticoes at the entrances were about a score of Pasha's carriages. From one of the balconies hung a few tawdry banners, with the crescent and star, such as one would expect to see at a village fair, all dragged and crumpled, waving over a kind of tribune or pulpit, from which it was intended that the Constitution should be read, but which was now being taken to pieces and removed as useless lumber, as the reading was accomplished within doors. No outward demonstration in Stamboul would have suggested the idea that anything particular had

been or was being done. In the evening the Bosphorus was lighted up and all alive with fireworks, not without a pleasing effect, notwithstanding the wet and murky state of the atmosphere. In Pera in the evening the "bears" of the "Petite Bourse," in the Hazzopoulo Passage, after succeeding in sinking the funds ten paras, broke up at eleven o'clock and paraded the streets with shouts of "*Vive la Constitution!*" a cry which, in the circumstances, sounded very like irony. I was told that a few Softas at Stamboul had held a torchlight procession and cried for "War!" But I believe neither the Constitution nor the Conference had anything to do with the little excitement observable among the population, which was only due to the recurrence of the Courban Baïram or "Feast of the Sacrifice" prescribed throughout Islam.

For twenty-six days after the inauguration nothing further was said about the Constitution, but on the 18th of January the Government of the Porte having determined to close the Conference with a complete rejection of all the European proposals, called together a Council of State extraordinary, to whose deliberation the resolution of the Cabinet was to be submitted. Midhat was anxious to throw the complicity of his rash deed on as many as he could summon, and he took great pains to give the meeting of that day more than usual solemnity. Besides the Ministers with or without portfolios and the Ulemas, all the heads of the non-Mussulman

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address ; while the Bulgarian Exarch was too persistently indisposed to yield to the solicitations of the messengers, who stormed him in his very bedroom to wrest his signature to statements which were in perfect opposition to all his convictions.

Everything considered, justice must be done to these poor high-priests, who behaved with becoming firmness and upheld their dignity in very trying circumstances ; for any assumption of a more independent attitude, any stinted acknowledgment of unbounded devotion and submission, any free complaint of or protest against the most galling and crushing misrule would be visited, they felt, with new vexations and exactions, and the most shocking deeds of violence and bloodshed upon their defenceless and unresisting flocks. There is nothing more heartrending than the chapter of grievances of these prelates and the chief members of their congregations—even of those bound to support the Government by personal interest—when they pour out their very hearts in their intercourse with persons on whose discretion they think they can rely ; nothing is deeper than their hatred of the ruling race, except the terror they live in of its very name ; nothing more pitiful than their appeal to all strangers, and especially to Englishmen, for help ; nothing more touching than their faith in the power of Europe, and especially of England, to redress their wrongs and relieve their sufferings. And it was precisely at this moment, when the Conference had al<sup>l</sup> even

come to an end of its labours, too evidently with no result, that these poor people beset their Western acquaintances, and asked them whether, indeed, the upshot of all these deliberations, the solemn announcement of the will of all Europe, was to be merely to aggravate their long martyrdom, to leave them at the mercy of their oppressors, now flushed with the triumph they have obtained over all the Powers, and still smarting under the indignity that these Powers had attempted to put upon them.

The Council of State of the 18th of January gave the world a specimen of what a Turkish Parliament, in the hands of Midhat Pasha, might be expected to be. The Grand Vizier addressed an assemblage of above 200 Councillors, and first read at full length the terms which constituted the *ultimatum* of the European Plenipotentiaries. He dwelt with great eloquence on the offensive character which rendered these proposals unacceptable, as being derogatory to the dignity and independence of the Ottoman nation, but he besought the Councillors to take into consideration the condition of the country, which he described in the darkest colours, pointing to the grave financial difficulties, the exhaustion of all national resources, and the more than doubtful issues of a war which the empire might have to wage against formidable enemies, and even alluding to the probability that the large stores of arms and ammunition which were on their way to Constantinople from Africa might be intercepted and seized by the

Russian squadron now cruising in the Mediterranean. The Grand Vizier's address was listened to with profound admiration, yet with occasional outbursts of well-acted impatience. The chorus or *claque* of the Young Turkey party humoured their leader, now with shouts of approbation, now with exclamations of contradiction, but always according as the great man could be presumed to wish to be seconded or opposed. His well-acted resentment of the indignity with which Turkey was being treated by the Powers was received with thunders of applause; any allusion to the possibility that concessions might have to be made to superior force was drowned in a storm of indignation and wrath. In the midst of all the din the whole of the Ulemas and some of the Old Turkey party observed the most rigid silence. At the close of the Vizier's speech, a clamour for the immediate and peremptory rejection of the proposed terms arose, leaving no doubt that the Minister's pleasure would carry everything before it. There followed a multitude of enthusiastic speeches, in which Mussulmans and Christians vied with each other in their patriotic zeal and devotion, and expressed their readiness to shed their blood to the last drop in support of the independent rights of their common Fatherland. Conspicuous among the non-Mussulmans was that same Savas Pasha, an Albanian physician, President of the Ottoman University, a man of extremely versatile genius, and, as I have said, till lately a very bitter enemy of Midhat, who broke out into

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rhapsody of compliments to the Grand Vizier, involving it in phrases of such warm and lofty Ottoman patriotism that it affected the orator himself even to tears. Other members of the Council indulged in frequent ejaculations to express not only their sympathy with the Vizier's indignation, but also their displeasure at his apparent little faith and despondency. "Turkey," they shouted, "has been made by the Constitution a match for all Europe!" The only attempt at timid dissent was made by Utidian Effendi, the Vakil or Vicar and administrator of the Protestant Armenians, who, without attempting to stem the overwhelming tide of passion which seemed to carry away the assembly or to abate its ardent devotion to the Grand Vizier, ventured to suggest that the matter under discussion was too grave to be disposed of by a hasty and tumultuous deliberation, and advised that the decision should be left to the Sultan's Government, which both deserved and enjoyed their unlimited confidence. This did not suit Midhat Pasha, whose object was to carry his point, while he wished to appear to yield to the overpowering will of the Council. The orator's words were drowned by an outburst of impatient disapprobation, the whole assembly rising and insisting on the summary rejection of the proposals of the Powers, which was once and again carried by acclamation, and eventually broke up the sitting.

Eighteen days elapsed after this grand triumph of Midhat, and in the early morning of Monday, the

5th of February, as we were coming home from the splendid midnight wedding of a young Armenian couple, we heard people whispering that the steamer which was to remove Midhat Pasha from Constantinople was already getting up steam. Towards noon a diplomatist of such high rank as the breaking up of the Conference has left among us, assured me that "unless Midhat regained public favour by the speedy conclusion of a peace with Serbia and Montenegro, his position would be no longer tenable." Not much later in the day I was informed that a struggle, probably attended with much bloodshed, was imminent between the "Old Turkey" party and the friends of Midhat and his Constitution. At 2 p.m. bulletins were already being sold in the Pera streets to the effect that Midhat had ceased to be Grand Vizier, and had in the morning embarked for an island in the Archipelago; also that Edhem Pasha had been raised to the Grand Vizierate. It was supposed at first that the late Sadrazam had been conveyed to Rhodes or Cyprus, or any other isle belonging to the Ottoman Empire, in which case he would only have been, as the expression was in Old Italy, "confined," or relegated; but, later in the day, it was understood that he had been sent to Syria or Brindisi, which meant that he was banished from the Sultan's dominions—an unusual and even not strictly legal punishment, deemed to be the most severe imaginable to a Mussulman, who has a natural horror of venturing beyond the pale of Islam. Even

in this case however Midhat's disgrace was a great improvement upon the practice followed by the Sultans of olden times, who, when they wished to withdraw their favour from an objectionable Prime Minister, sent him a bow-string as a parting present.

Midhat's fall however though less tragic, was quite as sudden as it would have been in those old days, and the causes of the catastrophe may be summed up in a few words. Midhat, satisfied with the success which his Constitutional scheme had achieved for him, seemed at a loss how to rid himself of some of those earnest and ardent members of the "Young Turkey" party, who either began to think that the Midhat Constitution did not fulfil all their wishes and aspirations, or found that their leader, now in power, was not as anxious to carry his liberal ideas into practice as he had been when merely a candidate for supreme honours. Of several of these disenchanted men he rid himself by appointing them to high offices as far from the capital as he could, but others either he was not willing to bribe, or they were not to be bribed, and these became disgusted with the Grand Vizier, and thought they could best carry out their object by turning their backs upon him and going over to his adversaries. One of the first who declared against Midhat from conscientious motives was Eb-uz-Zia Tefvik Bey, a "Young Turk," who, for his liberal ideas, had suffered banishment in the islands under the late Sultan

Abd-ul-Aziz. The old opponents of Midhat had, in the meanwhile, made their way into the palace, where they had set against the Grand Vizier many of the persons in the immediate confidence of the Sultan, and in the end the Sultan himself. People heard, though with much reluctance to believe it, that in spite of all his benevolent intentions, the good Abd-ul-Hamid found the restrictions imposed on the exercise of his sovereign authority under the Constitution somewhat irksome, and that he especially objected to the necessity of submitting his imperial decrees to the Minister's signature, without which they would be of no legal value. It was added, I know not with what foundation, that Midhat Pasha had lately aroused the suspicion of the court by paying a visit to Mehemet Rechat, one of the Sultan's brothers, next to the Sultan in age, and consequently the Heir Apparent to the House. Other persons again asserted that Midhat was conspiring, not with this younger brother, but with the eldest, the deposed Sultan Murad, who was now described as having in a great degree recovered from his mental infirmity, and exhibiting a lively interest in the world astir around him, inquiring where the soldiers were going he saw being shipped off day by day, wondering whether the country was at war or peace, and complaining that his best friends, among whom he frequently mentioned his former Grand Vizier, Mehemet Rushdi, were kept away from him. More probably however the men who determined the Prime Mini-  
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ter's fate, were Mahmoud Damad, the Sultan's brother-in-law, who had been long pointed out by public surmise as the probably future Grand Vizier ; Saïd Pasha, the Sultan's aide-de-camp, the superior artillery officer, formerly a pupil of the Woolwich Academy, whom Midhat had, on the very eve of his fall, endeavoured to remove from the Sultan's Council by appointing him director of all the military schools of the empire ; and Redif Pasha, the War Minister, Midhat's strongest opponent in the Cabinet.

Midhat's fall was effected with an excess of harshness and rudeness by the palace gang who had compassed his ruin. They refused either to let him see the Sultan or to communicate with his family at sufficient leisure, and ordered his embarkment with such haste as hardly allowed him to provide himself with clothes or money for his long journey, and although they did not, as had been stated, load him with chains, it is now positively ascertained that on the previous Saturday they had suffered him to be pushed and hustled by the eunuchs and by the rest of the *valétaille* as he was led down the palace stairs. Thus, they made by their ill-advised as well as inhuman conduct a hero and a martyr of a man whom neither intelligence nor character would perhaps have entitled to the prestige which misfortune has attached to his name.

Though the Sultan set thus the Constitution to work by breaking its fundamental principle respecting the inviolability of the subject's personal freedom



and immunity from any punishment not decreed by the sentence of a competent magistrate, and even invoked as a justification of his arbitrary act an article concerning the state of siege which could in no way apply to Midhat's case,\* his Imperial Majesty hastened at the same time to declare that the National Charter, though it was the Grand Vizier's work, was the Sovereign's irrevocable gift, intimating that it should survive its author's disgrace.

To usher in constitutional forms and to create a Parliament in a country like Turkey was no easy matter. But by dint of makeshifts and after many delays, a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies were either elected or appointed, and on the 19th of March a scene unlike anything the world ever exhibited was seen at Dolmabacheh Palace—the opening of the Chambers by him who calls himself the descendant of the Khalifs.

\* The article by which an attempt was made to justify Midhat's banishment comes among the "dispositions diverses" at the end of the Charter, and has no connection whatever with anything which either precedes or follows it. It reads thus :

"Art. 113. En cas de constatation de faits ou d'indices de nature à faire prévoir des troubles sur un point du territoire de l'Empire, le Gouvernement Impérial a le droit d'y proclamer l'état de siège. Les effets de l'état siège consistant dans la suspension temporaire des lois civiles, le mode d'administration des localités soumises au régime de l'état de siège sera réglé par une loi spéciale. A sa Majesté le Sultan appartient le pouvoir exclusif d'expulser du territoire de l'Empire ceux qui à la suite d'informations dignes de confiance recueillies par l'administration de la police sont reconnus comme portant atteinte à la sûreté de l'état."

Midhat was thus "hoist with his own petard."

I had a card, and drove, with many others, along the noisy main street of Galata, passed Fondookli and Tophaneh, and was set down at the palace entrance. It was then about one o'clock, and not more than the ordinary crowd was assembled, either on the thoroughfare or at the gates of the imperial residence. It was otherwise inside, where halls and staircases were swarming with every variety of Oriental costumes ; Pashas, Ulemas, and other grantees being led about, not without some confusion, and apparently somewhat at cross purposes. We were however under the escort of an accomplished "Young Turk," an official of the *Bureau de la Presse*, who showed the way through a perfect labyrinth of subterranean passages, and landed us in the office-room of Said Pasha, the half-Anglicised Marshal of the Palace, whence presently we were ushered into the throne-room, the scene of the day's ceremony. The throne-room fills up the central part of the main building of the Dolmabacheh Palace, and is without doubt the most splendid, and in some respects the handsomest hall I have ever seen. Its four walls are fronted each by three majestic arches, supported by clusters of Corinthian columns, and surmounted by a lofty dome encompassing the whole interior of the edifice. Opposite to the main entrance, on the side overlooking the garden and the Bosphorus, and before the central window, had been placed the throne, an uncanopied sofa, all gold and diamonds, with room for two or three sitters. The room was

therwise utterly bare of furniture, if we except a few strips of rich carpet laid in various lines alongside and across the parquettèd floor. The walls, the arches, and the dome were a mass of gold, tastefully diversified with a profusion of ornaments, flowers, vases, and arabesques, but without either a representation of any living thing, or even a scroll or inscription; a piece of exaggerated Mohammedan Puritanism which gave a somewhat dumb and blank aspect to the otherwise gorgeous apartment. From the centre of the dome hung a magnificent cut-glass lustre, and other gigantic pyramidal chandeliers of the same bright material stood in the corners of the room. Above the arches on each of the four sides, and underneath the cupola, were galleries, from which one might have hoped that the beauties of the imperial harem would be allowed to grace the solemnity with at least a glimpse of their half-veiled, full-moon countenances, but which were only tenanted by a few persons of the less-interesting sex.

The room was filling rapidly as we were led to our places under the arches of the southern side of the hall, and on the left of the throne the gaudy Halberdiers of the Sultan—a recent institution of Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, revived by his son Murad during his short and melancholy reign—men all in scarlet, with round bonnets surmounted by gaudy plumes—were drawn up on both sides of the hall. At the entrance end were the Heralds, or Kings-at-Arms, and here and there thin lines of Tirailleurs

with their rifles. In front of these, on either side of the hall, the *grande*es of the empire began to range themselves—on the left, some of the Pashas, the *Cazaskiers*, or supreme magistrates, the *Ulemas* of high degree, and in the uppermost rank, near the throne, the *Sheik-ul-Islam*, the Head of the *Der-vishes*, and the Sheriff of Mecca; on the opposite side, more Pashas, the Council of State, the Ministers, and, nearest to the throne, the Grand Vizier; behind these magnates, a few Patriarchs, the Rabbi, and other heads of the non-Mussulman communities, the difference between them and the *Mollahs* and *Ulemas* being that the dominant Church stood conspicuously foremost, while the clergy of the subject denominations had to shrink back and almost hide themselves in the second or third rank, where they were lost to view. The diplomatists came in a body, the Persian Minister leading, and after him the other Ministers now present at Constantinople, after whom followed the *Chargés d’Affaires* of the Great Powers, with their secretaries and dragomans. Of the *Chargés d’Affaires*, the Russian alone, M. Nelidoff, absented himself, and the Embassy was represented by M. Onou, the First Dragoman, a circumstance which did not escape notice, especially as M. Nelidoff was out riding, and could not plead ill-health. The Diplomatic Body was placed on the left, in the rear of the throne.

The spectators being thus in their places, the members of the two Houses were marshalled in, and

made to stand side by side on the transverse strips of carpet, all facing the throne, the Senators on the right, the Deputies on the left. The Senators, whose list had only been published in the evening, were about thirty, and were headed by Server Pasha, their newly-elected President. The Deputies mustered about three times as strong, and their President was the well-known scholar, Ahmed Vefik Effendi. The Senators, most of them old State functionaries, wore their grand official uniforms, with orders. The Deputies were in what is here plain civil dress, diversified here and there by the quaint primitive costumes, the picturesque turbans and long-flowing caftans of the remote Arab and Syrian provinces. Mussulmans of both Houses were intermingled, with no apparent distinction, and as, in a whisper to a neighbour, I was endeavouring to make out from the countenances the faith and nationality of the honourable gentlemen, I was taken up short by a burly Pasha by my side, who volunteered the information that there were here neither Mussulmans, nor Greeks, nor Armenians, but all were Osmanlis, or Ottomans—a fact on which I congratulated him, but about which I reserved my opinion. Some of those Osmanli faces, with their complexions and expressions, would have been a study for an artist or physiognomist, some for a detective.

At last, almost on the stroke of two, the cloth of gold was removed from the glittering throne, and the door on the right leading to the Sultan's apart-

ments was opened. Kiamil Bey, the master of the ceremonies, stepped up to the door, and presently fell back before the Sultan, who walked up to the throne and stood before it, slightly bowing, his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword, while the right held the imperial speech rolled up in a scroll. The Sultan's presence was hailed by the Heralds at the entrance by three shrill and somewhat unearthly yells of "Long live the Padishah!" while the vast assemblage remained profoundly silent, the grandees in the foremost ranks performing deep obeisances. Some of the Sultan's brothers and other princes of the blood had in the meantime taken their places in the rear of the throne. Mahmoud Damad, the Sultan's brother-in-law, that handsome and portly personage, waddled in with Said Pasha, the Marshal of the Palace, and other officers of the imperial household. At last all were in their places. The Sultan gave his speech to the Grand Vizier, who, in his turn, delivered it to the First Secretary of the Sultan, another Said Pasha, who read it in an inaudible voice, the reading lasting about twenty minutes. While the speech was being read the Sultan remained standing, his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword, the right now and then, more or less unconsciously, stroking his chin and twirling his moustache, a weary look, a somewhat anxious expression, gradually settling on his face. We read everywhere repeated assurances that the Sultan enjoyed the most perfect health; but the impression

the Sovereign made on those who saw him on that day was that of one worn and haggard, with much less strength than lingers about many a man twice his age.

The speech was simply a recapitulation of the sad events which, from the days of Sultan Mahmoud, led to the rapid decline and almost downfall of the Ottoman Empire, a decline which no attempted reforms could avert or delay, for the primary reason, as the Sultan thought, that his predecessors clung to a despotic system which harboured all the germs of evil in its bosom. The experiment of liberal European institutions was now to be made, from which a new life would spring up for the people and for the Government. The speech dwelt at some length on the financial difficulties of the country, and threw out hints as to some possible arrangements with the holders of Ottoman bonds. It congratulated the country on the peace just concluded with Servia, and augured well for the final issue of the pending negotiations with Montenegro. It concluded with some remarks on the relations of the Porte with foreign Powers, touched slightly on the failure of the Conference, and expressed confidence that the Powers would acknowledge in the reforms spontaneously contemplated by the Porte something exceeding in practical usefulness those which it did not deem it expedient to adopt at their suggestion.

When the reading was at an end the whole ceremony was over. The Sultan retired as he had entered,

with a slight inclination of the head to his assembled subjects, which was answered by very low bows on the part of the bystanders. The Heralds again uttered their sharp and weird shrieks of "Long live the Padishah!" The Sultan vanished by the side door, and the assembled multitude left the room with the same calm dignity as they had entered it.

I must not omit to say that the Sultan appeared on this, as on former occasions, in the plainest dress imaginable—a dark blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, without gold lace or any other ornament, the plain fez, without the diamond aigrette affected by his predecessors, the only distinctive mark being the Order of the Osmanieh, and, I was told, the gemmed hilt of the sword, which I did not see, as the Sultan's white-gloved left hand rested upon it from beginning to end. That severe simplicity, contrasted with the mass of gold with which the uniforms of all his Pashas, Viziers, Muchirs, Geniks, Ulemas, and other dignitaries were laden, marked the Sultan as the first gentleman of Turkey, standing apart from all that State, Court, and Church multitude. The whole ceremony was performed with that silent and dignified gravity which characterises Oriental life in all its phases, and was sufficiently imposing and impressive, notwithstanding that, except the reading of the speech, all the business of the day was acted in dumb show. Just as all was over and the Sultan had made his bow, the heavy ordnance of the ironclads moored close to the palace



gave voice, and their joyous thunder was responded to by the cannon of the forts, and, re-echoed by every cliff, bay and bend of the shore on either side of the Bosphorus, they filled the air with grand Titanic music, with which the clear sky, the bright spring day and the rippling sea admirably harmonised.

Immediately after the opening ceremony the two Chambers adjourned to their respective Houses at Dar-el-Founoun, where they were allowed to sit during the best part of the six months allowed to them for a session. There were now in Turkey men privileged to say whatever their hearts prompted, and responsible for their words neither to the Sultan nor even to the law, but to God alone. The sittings of the Senate were held with closed doors, but to the Lower House admission could be obtained by tickets, and reports, good or bad, of secret discussions were invariably made public. The Senate consisted at first of twenty-two members, to which very few additions were made. The Deputies never reached the appointed number of 120 ; the Ottoman Parliament had thus the advantage over the representative assemblies of other countries, that it was a small flock, sure to be quiet and orderly and to have only few black sheep among its members.

The members of this first or preliminary Chamber, elected at haphazard, and somewhat informally, under Government influence, consisted for the most part of former functionaries, and of Notables from among the classes whose instincts ought to be Conservative ;

but it was impossible that there should not have crept in among the number men of a tame and submissive disposition, and also a few crotchety minds with views and aspirations of their own and a spirit of contradiction which it would be dangerous to humour, yet by no means safe to oppose. Indeed we were assured that not a few among these members, both Mussulmans and Christians, loudly proclaimed in all men's hearing that, as they were called together to speak out, they would not fail to give the Government the full benefit of their opinions, were the consequence of their bold language to be expulsion from the Chamber, or even imprisonment and banishment.

The real truth is that Midhat, or those who undertook to carry out Midhat's scheme of a Constitutional Charter, did not well consider how much easier it is to crush a people's mind utterly and deprive them of all speech than to open their lips, with no matter how full a confidence that their minds will always be under control, and then prevent them speaking otherwise than as they are bidden. There was hardly anything that might be called public opinion in Turkey, and the notions about right and wrong in political matters, even of such men as Midhat, were exceedingly crude and vague ; but the instinct to inquire, to find fault, to point out evils and suggest remedies is instinctive to all men. However powerless it might be here for any practical good, it was sure to create and foster an agitation of which it was not easy to foresee the consequences. The same

might be said of the Press, which had hitherto been very harshly and arbitrarily dealt with, which had to depend on such limited patronage as the small portion of the many-tongued reading public afforded, and which yet held up its head not discredibly, some of the journals like the *Courrier d'Orient*, the *Stamboul*, and the *Phare du Bosphore*, not only boasting writers of considerable talent, but not unfrequently coming out with leading articles, the free audacity of which the Government did not always venture to repress. But, whatever might be thought of the capabilities of this deliberative body, which "Old Turkey" denounced as "*ce malheureux enfant qui gâtera tout*," there could be no two opinions about its President, Ahmed Vefik, who has turned out a wretched failure, and has nevertheless not yet been removed. The man knows enough of English to have heard that the House of Commons is ruled by a "Speaker," and probably conceived that his duty as a president was to "speak" for the whole assembly. Elderly gentlemen from remote provinces came before their colleagues with written speeches, which they muttered in a low and timid voice. In two minutes, lo! the President *prend la parole comme député*, and launches out into a long comment or refutation, his voice being almost alone heard from the beginning to the end of the sitting. A dictatorial, pedantic President, he even forgets himself so far as to cry, "*Suss*!" or "Hold your tongue!" when contradicted—a mode of closing

a controversy which is considered the height of ill-breeding among civilised Osmanlis. The fact is that Ahmed Vefik, with all his scholarship, had long been set aside as an unpractical man. He lived for many years as a disappointed recluse, and was more fit to keep a school than to direct a Parliament. He has already in two or three instances been outvoted by a large majority, and there was a strong party among the deputies and among the public who thought that the man was in the wrong place, and that he should be sent back to his hermitage at Roumeli Hissar, and his successor no longer appointed by the Sultan, but, as in all other Parliaments, by free election. Strange to say, this Ahmed Vefik, who is in many respects a Conservative from sheer Chauvinism, was sufficiently unwise to countenance, if not to promote, discussions on topics of foreign policy, in which the Chamber, so far as it lay in its power, prejudged open questions and embarrassed the Government. The same idle declamations which were heard from Midhat's "National Council," when the rejection of the proposals of the Conference was resolved upon, have been again and again indulged in when such questions as the conditions of peace with Montenegro, or the declaration of war to Russia came in for discussion. In some cases the Chamber was merely the echo of the settled determination of the Government, but again in others it volunteered unasked opinions, broke out in compromising invectives, and made indiscreet suggestions or put forth preposterous

demands. It, for instance, questioned the wisdom of trusting a certain financial agent with so important a mission as the negotiation of a loan in foreign countries, calling the man very hard names; it moved that Midhat should be recalled and tried; it repeatedly called for the repeal of the obnoxious Minister of War, Redif Pasha; it proposed the impeachment of Mahmoud Nedim, the Grand Vizier of Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, for peculation, when some very awkward remarks were made as to the proneness both past and present Ministers evinced to enrich themselves at the public expense. Finally it upbraided the wealthier classes of the community for their slackness in coming to the relief of the distressed treasury by subscriptions on behalf of the army, contrasting in this respect the niggardliness of the rich with the eagerness with which the poor hastened to drop their mite into the War Office strong boxes, never considering that a subscription is, at the best, but a clumsy, and by no means a fair way of providing for the exigencies of the exchequer, and indeed that it is rather an encouragement held out to the many stingy and selfish at the expense of the free-handed and generous. The Deputies seemed not yet to have learnt that it was for them not to beg, but to take what the State required, to see that the public burdens be adequate to the public wants, and that they fall equally on all subjects in just proportion to their wealth. When the tax-gatherer had brought in his full public harvest it would be time

to see what the solicitor for alms could glean out of private charity.

In matters of actual legislation however though the Deputies' speech was free, their vote was always at the beck either of the Ministers or of the considerable Mussulman majority. The law of *Vilayets*, or Provincial law, the Electoral law, and the Press law marked no very decisive steps in the way of liberal progress, and as to the budget, their discussions, if any occurred, did not fill many columns in the public prints.

The Deputies however touched on some points which ought to have been of vital importance for the welfare of the empire, and in the debates on those subjects the ugly side of the Eastern question soon became apparent. The Sultan had, in his speech from the throne, given credit to his predecessors, going back to the date of the Conquest, for the liberality with which they had at all times respected "the creed, the nationality, and the names of the subject-races." In the address which was to be sent back to the Sultan, and which was as usual merely an echo of his speech, it was proposed to add to those three boons vouchsafed by the conquerors to the vanquished also that of language; but the motion was, with unnecessary harshness and abruptness, combated by the President, who contended that the nation had "only one and the same language." A Greek Deputy, Sarakiotti, suggested that, although the country might have one common official tongue,

yet other idioms existed, necessary at least for ecclesiastical and educational purposes. The President seemed to insist that those languages had no right whatever to exist, and were doomed to disappear, and upon the Greek attempting to reply, he thundered forth his "*Suss!*" and declared that the subject must drop. Deputies are as yet too ill-prepared for such rebukes to protest against unbecoming despotic treatment, but the time will surely soon come when they will learn to stand upon their rights, and when subjects of vital importance will not be dismissed by a mere "*Suss!*" Meanwhile, there is no doubt that the question of language must, if a Constitution and decentralisation are to be realised in the Ottoman Empire, crop up at every moment, and from a variety of causes. In a memorandum of a late Grand Vizier, Aali Pasha, written in 1867, and published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of the 18th of September, 1876, a most interesting document, this matter of language is discussed at full length, the intelligent Grand Vizier asserting that, "although the Christians might, upon the introduction of free institutions, soon overpower the Mussulmans by their intelligence, their thrift, their wealth, and other advantages, the Osmanlis or Turks would always be able, by the mere means of their language, to hold their own, not only against the Christians, but also against the Arabs, Kurds, Pomaks, Circassians, and other Mohammedans of the subject-races." Midhat Pasha was aware of the

immense advantage which language would give to his own people when he made it imperative in his Constitution that every member of the National Assembly should know how to read and, "as much as possible," to write the Turkish language. That the Ottomans, if they were to constitute a nation, should have a national language was reasonable enough; but if, as Ahmed Vefik hinted, that language was to be forced down the people's throats and supersede the Greek, Armenian, etc., in the schools, and eventually in the churches, it is evident that such a change could only be effected by a struggle of which no man could anticipate either the magnitude or the issue. It is difficult to see how subjects of this nature can be excluded from Parliamentary deliberation, or how they can be discussed either in the Chamber or by the press without giving rise to an agitation endangering the very existence of the empire. Yet Constitutional life can be had at no other price, and it is absolutely necessary either that truth, reason, and justice should have a fair open field, or that opinion should be put down by main brute force, as it has hitherto been.

Again, in the discussion of the *Loi des Vilayets*, or Bill for the re-organisation of the Provincial Administration, with which the Chamber was busy for several weeks, the question of the admission of an equal number of Mussulman and non-Mussulman—*i.e.* faithful and infidel members, into the Councils,



irrespectively of the numbers of the population—cropped up almost at every sitting, and was equally objected to by Mohammedan and Christian Deputies, both on the ground of the undue ascendancy that such an arrangement gave to the minority in every community, and because it maintained that distinction between men of different faith which the Constitution had abolished, and wherein indeed lay the main sore of the body politic of the country. In the sitting of the 17th of April, for instance, Hadji Vassil Effendi, the member for Rhodes, observed that in one of the districts of his province, the Archipelago, there were 2000 Christian and 25 Mussulman families, and in that of Menteche 4000 Mussulman and 25 Christian families. Should these distinctions be suppressed, and should the electors be all looked upon as Ottomans, as is most clearly ordered, and should they be all free to choose their representatives wherever they wished, there could be no cause for complaint. But here was applied to the whole empire the experiment which so signally failed in Crete, and the result was sure to be the same dissatisfaction and ferment in every province as there has been for the last ten years in that island. Strange to say, the arguments urged in favour of the clause were: that it provided for the representation of minorities, and that the inequalities complained of in the minor councils would be smoothed down by mutual concession in the general assemblies. This would be the same as if in Eng-

land or in any other European country Liberals and Conservatives should be bound by law to return an equal number of members for all municipal and provincial boards, in the hope that whatever undue weight was given to the representation of one party in local councils would find its balance in the national Parliament. All reasoning on the subject was however to no purpose. In an earlier debate the Greek Deputy, Sarakiotti, was bidden by the President to hold his tongue, and towards the close of the discussion the answer was, "All has been said, the phrase must abide as it is." The President then put the question to the vote, bidding those who wished the phrase "Mussulman and non-Mussulman" to remain, raise their hands, when only about half a score of Greeks crossed their arms on their breasts, all the other members—Turks, Armenians, etc.—raising their hands. Even after the vote a Deputy, Cantardji Effendi, said that the Chamber had no right to establish a rule repugnant to the Constitution, as by Article 117 it was for the Senate to interpret the clauses of the Constitution. All was of no avail. The objection came too late. Thus the great cardinal point of distinction between race and creed was laid at rest for the present. A Mussulman Deputy, Manouk Effendi Karadja, expressed a hope that "in some twenty years, when, with the progress of instruction, greater uniformity of opinion should arise, it would be time to take such proposals into consideration; but just

now, with the differences of creed, of race, of temperament, nothing could be changed."

And if nothing was to be changed it was evidently a folly to think of charters or Parliaments in Turkey, and it becomes very clear that the Grand Vizier, Edhem Pasha, was right when he said, as reported by the *Turquie*, that either the Deputies must learn to hold their tongues, or they will have to be sent about their business—"Either they or we (the Government) must be shut up."

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SOVEREIGN AND HIS STATESMEN — THE CABINET AND THE CAMARILLA. — TURKISH ADMINISTRATION. — THE PORTE IGNORANT OF THE ANDRASSY NOTE — STATE BUSINESS IN TURKEY. — ATROCITIES IN THE CAPITAL. — AIVADIAN. — ALI NASMI. — TURKISH PRISONS — BULGARIAN PRISONERS. — CASSAPE — KEMAL BAY. — A NEW CHAPTER OF HORRORS.

EVEN had it been possible at any time for the Midhat Constitution, or for any other imaginable charter to work any good for Turkey, it would not have been easy for it to overcome the difficulties arising from its inopportune promulgation. The empire had then still an open insurrection in some of its provinces, and a precarious armistice with two of its semi-independent principalities; and it was awaiting the upshot of diplomatic transactions, the failure of which left it exposed to a quarrel with one of the mightiest European states. Liberties were bestowed upon the Ottoman people under circumstances in which it is deemed advisable for other nations to suspend their liberties; in which the safety of the people becomes the supreme law, and

individual rights are, if not formally, at least virtually in abeyance.

No important changes, moreover, were ever effected in any community without the providential agency of a great man ; a Cavour for the Kingdom of Italy, a Bismarck for the German Empire. But no master mind, no truly noble heart, no king of men, made his appearance in Turkey's sore need. Of three Sultans who followed upon one another within the space of about three months, the first was done away with as a monster, the second was shut up as a lunatic, the third must be reckoned among the Sovereigns who reign and rule not. Every man who ever came back after an interview with Abd-ul Hamid invariably brought with him the impression that the Padishah was a "poor thing." This referred, of course, to his physical appearance, to a frame constitutionally weak and worn out by the early debaucheries and even the recent dissipations of harem life. With respect to his mental faculties, there was indeed some conflict of opinions, but Mr. Layard, the Ambassador temporarily accredited to his Court in Sir Henry Elliot's absence, is almost the only one who seems in his frequent interviews with the Sultan to have conceived a very favourable notion of his intelligence, as well as of the benevolence and true liberality of his disposition. For some time it was even thought and said that the Sultan exhibited the symptoms of that fitful melancholy, of those nameless fears and flashes of wrath

ch broke out into actual madness in the case of brother, and with which the blood of this latter generation of the House of Osman seems irremediably tainted. Be it as it may, it is evident that Abd-ul-nid has no will of his own, and almost from his accession he has been more hopelessly a slave of his surroundings than even his uncle, Abd-ul-Aziz, ever of his Ministers. The graciousness and generosity of the would-be popular Sovereign are seen in eagerness to dispense with servile adoration and court etiquette, in the ease with which he sits at same table or is driven in the same carriage with his advisers, and in the readiness with which he will open the gates of his gardens of Yildiz Kiosk to the amusement of the metropolitan multitude, expressly excluding Mussulman women. But Abd-ul-Hamid is no statesman-king, and he has no influence in the choice of his statesmen. He was himself chosen by his brother's Ministers; and he sacrificed Mehemet Rushdi to Midhat, and Midhat to Mehmed Emin, men who since Midhat's fall have had their feet on their imperial master's neck, Mahmoud Damad, Sultan's brother-in-law, and Said Pasha, "the brute among brutes," as he called himself, the brother-in-law's brother-in-law. The amount of mischief these palace minions did and are doing, in thwarting the feeble Padishah's good intentions will, perhaps, never be fully known. It was by them that Midhat was removed, and it was by them that Redif, Seraskier, or War Minister, has in these latter

days, July 13th, no one knows by what means or for how long a period, been almost miraculously got out of the way. Of Midhat's abilities, and of his sincerity, I have already expressed my frank opinion; he may thank his violent political death, as many a statesman before him had reason to be grateful for a timely natural decease—*felix opportunitate mortis*—but the way in which he discounted a Parliament that was yet to be elected, both in his dealings with the Conference and in his transaction with the English agents for the holders of the Guaranteed Loans, sufficiently proved that his Charter was meant for an instrument, not to do good, but to sanction evil; it was the mere hypocrisy of a Constitution, a homage paid by tyranny to Liberalism. At the time of Midhat's fall it was sheer chance which brought Edhem to the palace, when the thought that a successor to the disgraced Grand Vizier must be appointed struck Midhat's victorious enemies. Mahmoud Damad, who from the outset aspired to the Prime Minister's place, never mustered up sufficient courage to seize on an office which must necessarily remove him from his brother-in-law's side. The Grand Vizier-maker, he understood, could not be Grand Vizier; so Edhem was made to fill the vacancy, on the understanding that his appointment was to be for a week or a fortnight at the utmost, and he abode always in the expectation of being superseded, and for the only reason that no possible Sadrazam was forthcoming, that would less presume to do

good or less dare to prevent evil. Men of average abilities in a subordinate capacity were and are to be found here and there in the various departments of the Ottoman administration; but as to a real Minister, a real leader of the Government, it can safely be said that throughout this anxious crisis Turkey never had one in the Cabinet, as she never had a general able to avail himself of her soldiers' undoubted bravery in the field.

But even had the head and every member of the Ottoman Government been men of transcendent genius, and had the times been the most peaceful and orderly, it is not easy to imagine how shape and method could be introduced into an administration in which chaos reigns supreme, which has no traditions, and in which every functionary seems to have hardly any connection either with his actual colleagues or with his predecessors. The world was amazed to hear how the proceedings of the Conference had to be interrupted for two or three days because neither of the Ottoman Plenipotentiaries—not Edhem lately Ambassador in Berlin, and not Safvet Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs—“had ever heard of, or at least read, the Andrassy Note,” and when it was handed to them, another day was required to enable them to have it translated. The European delegates, their secretaries and others in attendance, if they ever crossed over from Pera to Stamboul on business, became familiar with official manners and customs which astonished even more than it amused



them. The following is almost verbatim the account that one of the gentlemen of Lord Salisbury's suite gave of his interview with the under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a Greek, a Christian, an accomplished and genial man, of acknowledged abilities, and well acquainted with the organisation of more advanced communities.

"I drove across the bridge," he said, "and found myself at the House whose door or 'Porte' represents the Government, the Sovereign, and the very might and greatness of the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte is a plain, low, wooden building with entrances at various sides, a labyrinth of staircases, passages, and corridors leading to endless apartments, the deal boards of the floor all uncarpeted, those of the walls not painted or whitewashed; and the whole palace inside and out undistinguishable from the commonest cattle-shed or improvised barrack. In every passage and at every door you have a throng; a clatter of heavy-booted or slipshod feet quite as incessant and almost as noisy as you have left behind you at the Karakeui bridge; women as many as men; dervishes, cavasses, Greek priests, Persians, Circassians, and negroes; all the medley and ruffraff of the East. 'Entrance free,' as at the bazaars; no porter or porter's lodge, no guards, no guidance or inscription to point out the way; apparently no division of labour, no official departments. With the exception of the War Office, which is at the Seraskierate, the Ministry of Marine at the

Admiralty, and the Finance, which has a palace of its own, all the Ministerial offices are here. It is here, especially, that a European may hope to find those he is most likely to seek, the Grand Vizier, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his Secretary.

“ If you have the *carte du pays*, or a *cavass*, or *valet de place*, to show the way, you walk in at once where you list, for the *salle des pas perdus* is unknown in Turkey, and one need not cool his heels in the corridors unless such is his pleasure. You just step in, and find yourself in the presence of some high functionary—say the Musteshar, or under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He rises from his seat, shakes hands with his visitors in the European fashion, but with the most consummate Eastern grace and courtesy ; and, if you are a distinguished visitor, makes room for you on his own sofa or settee. Presently coffee and cigarettes are handed to the new comers, no allusion to business being allowed, and hardly any conversation except a flattering but somewhat languid interchange of compliments, till those rites of hospitality are gone through. Meanwhile, you have leisure to look round and take stock of the things and persons about you. It may be some surprise for an utter stranger to find himself in a room utterly destitute of furniture, unless one counts as such the row of settees which runs all round the room, and the little strips of carpet spread here and there in front of them. Before the great man of the office there is a small table with nothing on it except

a little black pot, which may be an inkstand, and a bundle of cigarettes. Nearly the whole range of the settees is occupied by a motley crowd, chiefly dragomans from the Embassies, petitioners, subordinate officials, personal friends, or simply idlers and loafers of unknown station or description. These are here apparently on no particular errand; there they sit quietly, now and then hazarding some innocent observation in whispers, or exchanging telegraphic nods and smiles, *temenahs*, or other dumb salutations as they take their seats on coming in, or rise from them in going out.

“The fact is that the Turks, and the Christians who associate with them, are still faithful to their tent-life traditions. They know little of our home luxuries even in their harems, and nothing whatever in their places of business. They want neither chairs nor tables, and look upon everything besides a bit of carpet as superfluities. They like to squat on the floor, to eat their dinner off it, without forks or spoons, to look at one another with their chins on their knees, nursing their legs and holding their tongues. Your Musteshar, though perfectly conversant with European usages, must conform to Turkish customs at least in his office, whatever he may do at his private residence. When the little disturbance produced by the stranger’s entrance has subsided, and the silence of a Quaker meeting has gone on to a sufficient length, the order of the day is resumed, and one of the assembled company, or a

new comer, steps up to the under-Secretary, when business begins in good earnest. 'Ha, yes! it is you, X——,' says the under-Secretary, addressing a Russian dragoman; 'you are welcome—here I have your affair.' And out from under some cushion of the great man's sofa he produces a silk bag, tied up with strings, filled with papers crumpled and jumbled together in such confusion as no thrifty housekeeper would tolerate in the arrangement of her tradesmen's bills. That bag and others of the same description answer the purpose of the drawers, strong boxes, shelves, and pigeon-holes of an archive for the State documents of the Foreign Department. 'Here, I have it,' says the Secretary, rummaging in that chaos. 'Stay, no, this is not it; where has it thrust itself now? It was here this morning; it was here last evening. *Ha! à propos*, here, Y——,' he continues, abruptly turning to another person, an English dragoman—'this is the copy of the note you called for on Monday—you remember—when we had such a famous hunt after it, and now here the wretched paper is staring at us, biting us. There, you have all you want. As to you, X——, I must look into this other bag. Hang it! not here either! nor here! nor here! Upon my word, X——, you will have to come again for it to-morrow or next day. I shall be in luck then as I have been with Y—— to-day.'

• This may seem a slovenly way of carrying on the affairs of an empire; but it has at least the advantage that, at a pinch, the Musteshar may ride away

with the archives of his department in his saddlebags ; for the Turk is, and will be to the end of time, a nomad ; his instinct is that " he has no abiding city here," and must in any emergency be ready for a flitting. That explains how it is that a census of the population, the registration of landed property, surveys, and map-making are such impracticable operations under Turkish rule. The Turk is no clerk ; his pen is a reed ; he uses the smallest slips of paper ; the palm of his left hand is his writing-table, and his alphabet is so complicate an affair, I am told, that it takes a smart lad six years' labour to learn to read ; and the repugnance of your good Mussulman to " black and white " is traditionally so great that he is said to look upon a *written contract* as something liable, if not actually intended, to be torn, while he is never known to break his pledged *word*. "*Scripta pereunt, verba manent* ;" not as with us, "*Verba volant, scripta manent*."

" But," my informant continues, " your call upon the Musteshar was perhaps merely a visit of ceremony, or you may object to enter into any explanation before the promiscuous company which makes of his office a lounge or gossip room ; so you make up your mind to take leave, and adjourn for a more intimate interview to the Secretary's private residence, unless you prefer to apply to the Pasha, his chief, or to the Grand Vizier himself at his *konak*. The *konak*, or private dwelling, is scarcely less accessible than the *bureau* ; but it has this advantage,

that it boasts antechambers as well as chambers, and the Great Man has to be reached through a little preliminary ordeal, requiring something like deliberation and perseverance on the part of his visitors. An unknown stranger's admission at the door and into the waiting-room—as was seen in the instance of Hassan, the Circassian murderer at Midhat's *konak*—is the easiest matter. You find a crowd there, persons of high, low, and nondescript rank, all seated, all silent, demure and patient, looking as if they had been there for years, and meant to bide there for years to come. Most of them have avowedly no business; they haunt the Minister's antechamber as amateurs, to see or to hear what is going on, or to enjoy an easy seat under a watertight roof, and in a pleasantly warm ambient, just as Italians bask in the sun in winter and call it 'burning a cheap faggot.' You are met as you enter by a kind of master of the ceremonies, a poor relative or humble friend and client of the Great Man, who, with many bows and much fidgeting of his right hand from his knees to his forehead, motions you to a seat, and presently sees that the inevitable cup of thick coffee and the cigarette are properly handed to you. Then there you are, and there you sit. You try your French with the Great Man's gentleman, but the headway you make is not much. No one asks your business, or even supposes you to have any, and soon your very presence in the anteroom is forgotten, and you may play Patience on a Monument from

morning to evening, without a hint ever being thrown out that the seat you are now occupying may be wanted for another's accommodation. If you actually ask to see the Great Man, you are of course assured, with the most refined politeness, that he will be delighted to see you, but 'he is busy' just now and you must have patience for a few minutes. And you wait, and you wait, till either your power of endurance is worn out and you go away, or it suddenly strikes you that you might as well try to *forcer la consigne* and break through, when the master of the ceremonies, perceiving that you will take no denial, finds out all at once that the Great Man is perhaps disengaged ; he hastens into the presence preceding you, but leaving you, after all, to tell your name and introduce yourself, or the Great Man to guess who you are as he can. You are not likely to find the Great Man alone, or to get him to take the hint that the business which brings you to him is of a private character. At all events he understands, or pretends to understand, no European language, and will not dispense with the intervention of dragomans. For the Turk has a deep-rooted aversion to *tête-à-tête* business of any kind, and especially to such as has to be negotiated with those 'hatted Giaours' who have lately been so sorely plaguing him with 'autonomies, equality of races and creeds, and whole duties of men.' When closeted with you, however, the Great Man professes himself delighted to see you ; he is all attention, all

deference, all amiable assent to whatever you may have to tell him. 'To be sure ! you are quite right ! Nothing could be more lucid, more reasonable, more undeniable than what you say.' Your arguments are irrefutable ; your demand granted sooner than made. 'If what you ask is only difficult, it shall be done ; if it is impossible, it is done.' Your Pasha or Vizier is a very phoenix among statesmen. You go away charmed both with him and with yourself, and inordinately proud of the success of your clever little diplomatic management. Days pass however and somehow things remain as they were ; not a word referring to your particular affair reaches you. You are surprised at first, then vexed and impatient. You begin to apprehend that you have been jockeyed. You go back to the *konak*. You find your Great Man blander than ever, more than ever ready to give smiles and oblige ; but somehow the thing has slipped from his memory ; he will have to talk the matter over with his superior, or to consult his subaltern about it ; it will have to go through the many windings and turnings of the Circumlocution Office, and eventually to be sent up to the Sultan for his final sanction. Meanwhile the Great Man 'greatly regrets he is very busy,' or he has a bad headache, unfitting him for work or even talk, or he is wanted at Court or in Council. He has no time to bestow on you or your business. What seemed as good as done on the first interview has become not so easily manageable at the second visit ; it looms more and



more formidable on the third and fourth; its difficulties growing from day to day to such an extent that you end by doubting whether your lifetime will be long enough to enable you to overcome them before all is over."

Such is the experience of every man whose political, religious, commercial, or any other imaginable affair has to be transacted with their Highnesses and Excellencies at the head of the Ottoman Government, especially if these have to be pestered about reforms in their administration or dunned about payment of overdue coupons. A Turkish Minister is too much of a gentleman to say "Nay" in plain words; but, on the other hand, there is no man who can more adroitly or more unconscionably lead you by the nose, evade, baffle and wear you out by delays, chicanes, and downright thimble-rigging tricks, reserving to himself only to grant your demand when he finds that you have both the will and the power to enforce it.

Lest people should feel inclined to laugh at these primitive ways of the men at the head of the Turkish administration, it should be remembered that it has its tragic as well as its comic side. At the time of the Servian war a good friend of mine, residing at Kadikeui, across the Bosphorus, near Scutari, told me that on the 24th of July he saw several steamers arriving laden with wounded soldiers from the seat of war, who were conveyed on stretchers from the landing-place to the Turkish hospital at Haidar

Pasha, not far from the English cemetery at Scutari. The convoy lasted several hours, and nothing could be more miserable than the appearance of these poor sufferers, dirty, evidently half-starved, hardly covered with the mere shreds and patches of their military costume. They were landed not at the railway pier, which is only 200 yards from the hospital, but at Modah Bournou, the extreme end of Kadikeui, at the distance of nearly two miles, and had thus to endure an unnecessary hour of hard jolting over rough roads, the groans their torture wrung from them being, as my friend said, "truly horrible." The only explanation that this apparent cruelty admitted of was that the authorities were unwilling to allow their many wounded to go through the Scutari suburbs inhabited by Turks, where the sight of their sufferings and of the wretched condition in which they were brought back might have created a dangerous commotion among the people, and preferred to smuggle them round the outskirts of Kadikeui, through an almost entirely Christian quarter, where no disturbance could be apprehended—the torture of the poor soldiers being thus aggravated by a diabolically political desire to conceal it.

I have given these particulars, on the perfect truthfulness of which I firmly rely, because they convey a clear evidence of the clumsiness and recklessness with which the military as well as every other department of the public service in Turkey is managed. I am perfectly willing to acquit the

Turks of wanton and deliberate inhumanity. They simply know no better. You need hardly visit their hospitals or prisons; indeed, you have only to walk along the streets of their towns, large or small, to see the undeniable signs of a sorrowfully backward, if not obstinately stationary, civilisation.

The worst cases, however, are not those which may be ascribed to carelessness and improvidence. I could quote many instances of deliberate and refined savagery, and charge with them even the Grand Vizier, Mehemet Rushdi, an old man who for some time, so far as humane feelings go, has been held to be somewhat above the common run of Pashas. The editors of three Armenian journals published in Constantinople—the *Hairenik*, the *Ararat*, and the *Medjimonar*—had published a letter giving an account of some cruelties and brutalities committed by the military in several villages of the district of Shanar, near Trebizond, and especially on some Armenian priests. These outrages, the letter stated, were of so grave a nature, that the Imam of one of the mosques, a witness of the occurrence, had ventured to remonstrate with the officers, a captain and a major, by whose order the Armenians were ill-treated. Two of the three editors (for one happened to be absent) were brought before Blaque Bey, the director of the Bureau de la Presse, who sent them on to the Grand Vizier. By both these functionaries the editors were upbraided as bad citizens and called by opprobrious names, and were at last ordered off

by the Grand Vizier to the central office of the police. As they were leaving the audience-room of the Grand Vizier they saw themselves surrounded in the antechamber by about thirty yahvers, zap-tiehs, and cavasses, who called for ropes to tie their hands behind their backs. One of the editors, M. Aivadian, of the *Ararat*, mistaking their purpose, and thinking the ropes were to be used to hang them, called out "Murder," and raised so loud an alarm that people outside thought that an attempt was being made on the Grand Vizier's life, where-upon the man was fallen upon by those alguazils, stunned with blows, felled to the ground, and kicked in vital parts with such viciousness as to confine him to his bed for several days. The prisoners were then pinioned and taken to the police station, where, after a few idle questions, they were released on bail. Their troubles however were not yet over, for they were bidden to go to Trebizonde, where an inquiry was to be instituted to test the truth of the statements contained in the letter which they had reproduced.

The inquiry proved that the editors, far from exaggerating, had greatly understated the outrages their correspondence had exposed. In the meanwhile the unfortunate M. Aivadian had received in the Vizier's antechamber, and within hearing of the Great Man, severe and cruel hurts, of which he died after long sufferings; when the Armenians of Constantinople, moved by the atrocity of the case out of

their habitual timidity, attended his funeral *en masse*, with a display of feelings and an outspoken sympathy for the deceased which almost amounted to a bold political demonstration.

A greater sensation however was made by a far more brutal case, for which a far more brutal man than Mehemet Rushdi was answerable : I allude to that of Ali Nasmi, the young military student who was reported as having been bastinadoed to death at the Seraskierate. A telegram announcing the atrocious deed appeared in the *Times* of the 10th of April, 1877, and was somewhat vaguely and clumsily contradicted by the Ottoman Ambassador, Musurus Pasha, when a more precise statement was printed in the *Times* of the 16th. It was as follows.

“As I was about to close my letter on Friday last, information was brought to me that a student of the Military School at Pancaldi, by name Ali Nasmi, had been bastinadoed to death in one of the prisons of the Seraskierate, or War Office, Stamboul. The deed seemed to me so atrocious that I should have hesitated to report it, had not the particulars been insisted on with so much earnestness by my informant as to leave me no doubt about the truth of this terrible narrative. I have since received full confirmation that the tale is in the main perfectly true, though I am now able to modify it in some of its circumstances. I now return therefore to the subject.

“Four of the students at Pancaldi, soon after

Midhat's fall, wrote a letter to a Turkish journal denouncing the illegality of his banishment, and pleading for his recall. The editor of the paper told them he could not publish the letter unless it was signed, their names being necessary, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. Having thus wrested from the young men their signatures, the editor sent the MS. to Redif Pasha, the War Minister. The students were then summoned to the Seraskier's presence, who upbraided them in no measured terms, and upon one of them, Ali Nasmi, a youth of twenty-two, and the most promising and popular pupil of the school, avowing himself the author of the letter, the Minister slapped his face, and ordered the four to be shut up in one of the dungeons of the Seraskierate. Other students from the school suspected of complicity with the writer of the letter were subsequently arrested, and, as I told you at the time, sent in batches to distant provinces, some of them to Yemen. It was even contemplated to remove the school from the capital and transfer it from Pancaldi to Adrianople. The four students originally arrested, or, at least, Ali Nasmi, remained behind, and the latter was brought before a court-martial, or *conseil de guerre*, held by the Minister's order in one of the dungeons of the War Office. The court, it is now stated, pronounced sentence of death, afterwards commuted into the bastinado. Being strictly private, I have not been as yet able fully to ascertain whether the penalty

was inflicted by means of that horrible instrument of torture known in Turkey as the *falaca*—on which the sufferer's body is stretched with his feet upwards, and the blows of the stick are administered on the soles of both feet—or whether he was flogged or caned in any other way. Suffice it that he was most inhumanely beaten with sticks. My first informant told me that the youth had been sentenced to receive 200 blows, and died on the spot at the 105th. Other accounts lead us to believe that he died within twenty-four hours of his being removed from the rack. Others again suppose that he did not actually die, but fainted, and that the eye-witness from which the tragedy was made known, in his emotion, mistook the syncope for actual death. It is well known that the pain of the bastinado on the feet is so intense as often to produce the rupture of a blood-vessel.

“In confirmation of my original statement, I have since satisfactorily ascertained that the mother of Ali Nasmi was informed that her son had been brought before the court-martial and had received forty blows with a stick, and that the penalty was to be reinfllicted the following day; that upon her applying to the Seraskierate for information about her son, she was repulsed with great harshness, and with threats of being herself arrested and sharing the fate of her son, whom she should not see again unless she kept very quiet. I may add that about the time this dreadful tragedy was consummated, a cock-and-bull

story was got up at Stamboul about a student of the Military School being sent by the Seraskier to the palace, it was said, as bearer of a sum of money, and on his way being fallen upon by thieves, who had beaten him with sticks to a shapeless mass of broken bones ; that two women, having found his body in the street, had informed the authority at the Seraskierate, who, having taken their depositions, had removed and interred the dead and vainly, of course, sent the public officers on the traces of the alleged malefactors. This was apparently a clumsy stratagem, intended to rid the murderers of Ali Nasmi of the keeping of a corpse by sending it out to be killed a second time by other hands—a device common enough in the East, and familiar to the readers of such stories as that of the Little Hunchback in the ‘Thousand and One Nights.’”

The publication of these particulars gave rise to a very warm and long controversy at Pera where the *Levant Herald* and the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* showed the utmost zeal in denying the fact, the latter even suggesting the propriety of “putting an end to such absurd reports for the future,” a hint which Redif Pasha took by bringing an action against the *Times*’ correspondent before the Mutesarif’s Court,\* but all arguments broke down

\* A prosecution was in fact begun by the Seraskierate a few weeks later, but the proceedings did not go far. The police-court could not without much difficulty be made to understand that the man before them was not responsible in Turkey for an offence com-



before the terrible evidence that since April last, and up to the present time, July, 1877, nothing authentic has been seen or heard of Ali Nasmi.

That the bastinado in all its repulsive atrocity is in some cases still administered in Turkey we have full evidence. It was applied in the early part of last February, at Adana, in Asia Minor, in the cause of a conscript who excused himself from the service, pleading that he suffered from epileptic fits. Although the man brought witnesses in support of his assertions, the Mutesarif, or Deputy-Governor, would not believe him, and threatened him with the bastinado. The mere threat actually brought on a fit, but the Mutesarif, insisting that the conscript was merely shamming, proceeded from the menace to the actual infliction of the torture, when the man died, after only a few blows, from the rupture of a

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mitted in England, that all articles and correspondence in an English journal are anonymous publications, for which the journal alone or its publisher can be made to answer, and only before an English Court. The case of course broke down at once; as, on the defendant being asked whether or not he was the correspondent of the *Times*, he refused to answer the question, but in return, questioned the Court as to what ground they had for identifying his person with the correspondent of the aforesaid journal, and as neither the Court nor the official prosecuting in the name of the Seraskierate, or Ministry of War, had any answer ready, the case was remanded, the official of the War Office engaging to produce the English journal, with the signature of the correspondent printed at the top of his letter, an engagement which it seems to have been difficult for him to keep, as the correspondent heard nothing more of the suit.

bloodvessel. The dreadful tragedy was referred by one of the Embassies to Savfet Pasha, the Foreign Minister, who promised to inquire into the matter, but nothing was ever done, and up to the present moment the Mutesarif still occupies his post. And in a correspondence from Vodená of the 22nd of March, quoted in the *Phare du Bosphore*, and never contradicted, we read that in the circumscription of Kazan, a dependency of Monastir, on the 20th of March "le Mudir fit arrêter un boulanger, et lui fit administrer une bastonade impitoyable. Ce pauvre diable, meurtri de coups, fut laissé presque mort. Plainte ayant été portée au Kaïmakam celui-ci, ivrogne de profession, ne prêta aucune attention, bien au contraire; il se rendit dans la prison ou gisait le boulanger, et le régala d'une seconde édition de coups de triques." The above is the case of a civilian. Some persons contend that although all torture and corporal punishment, and among others the *falaca*, or bastinado, were abolished by the Constitution, the abolition does not extend to the military, who are subject to a special penal code of their own. This exception however ought to have been mentioned in the Imperial Charter.

But if any one wished to learn how that Imperial Charter was carried out in the capital, and almost in sight of the Ministers who had promulgated it, he had only to pay a visit to the Central Prison at Stamboul.

It is a plain large building facing the mosque with the six minarets, and there is not much to interest

the visitor in the interior, for the horrors of former days, though still existing, are kept out of sight. A gentleman who was allowed to inspect one of its dungeons however gave me the following fearful description :

“ I went down below the level of the paved court, and was confronted by a massive door fastened by a ponderous iron bar. The door was opened ; I went in and found myself in a large crypt entirely destitute of any skylight, loop-hole, or any cleft or fissure through which, the door being closed, either outer air or day light could be admitted. The thick walls all round were damp and mouldy, and the floor was bare earth, muddy and foul beyond imagination. There was no stretcher or board or pallet for a bed, no stool, no table, no article of furniture or utensil of any kind. The wretched man lay on a thin piece of matting, all wet, all torn to shreds, and had nothing besides to relieve his absolute, intense misery.”

But, above ground, there are none of the repulsive features of a prison ; the prisoners are well fed, not treated with unnecessary harshness, and allowed long hours of relaxation in the *couloirs*, lobbies and passages, for the benefit of air and exercise, where a stranger, upon the slightest encouragement on his part, finds them extremely sociable and communicative. During these hours of promenade the dwellers of the various cells are thrown together *pêle-mêle*, and, till custom has reconciled one to it, it is natural to be shocked by the sight of State

prisoners, sometimes men of rank and education, having to struggle through the crowd of common felons and malefactors; the journalist Cassape, for instance, or Kemal Bey, a literary man and a politician, elbowing past such monsters as Hadji Vassily, the coffee-house keeper, whose murder of the two sisters Hamalik filled Pera with horror a year ago, or the Circassian, accomplice of the latter, who, after the enjoyment of twelve months' impunity, was lately sent to keep him company, after the trial in which he appeared as witness. Hardly perceptible in the throng of common thieves, burglars, and highway-men, there still linger within those walls a few score of Bulgarians, mostly simple peasants and poor villagers, those who escaped the massacres and the first wholesale executions in that province, men who were arrested at haphazard, their guilt unknown to them as well as to those who apprehended them, and brought here, where no one ever asked their business, and where no one seemed any longer to trouble himself about them. It was especially in favour of these that one of Lord Salisbury's secretaries exerted himself so far as to have their irons removed. Had that gentleman been longer at Constantinople, he might and would probably have insisted that the men should either be brought to trial or released from their long durance.

• For these men, besides the general amnesties proclaimed by the present Sultan and by his immediate predecessor, a special order of release was lately

obtained by Mr. Layard, and their actual deliverance was announced in a telegram appearing in the London papers on the 9th of last May; but the announcement was premature, and up to this day, July 23rd, "no bolt has been drawn." The jailers aver that the heavy chains which were afterwards removed did not belong to the Stamboul establishment, but had been brought with the Bulgarian prisoners from their province, and it was owing, not to any refinement of cruelty, but to a mere oversight, that they were allowed to groan under their weight for six months. This circumstance, and the fact that some of them were for many days shut up in the dungeons of which the above-described is a specimen, had this result, that out of the ninety the Bulgarians were on their arrival, eight have died within the year. These men suffered death for offences which were not only never proved, but even never clearly and positively stated.

But even more striking, because concerning individuals of higher rank and more accustomed to the refinements of civilised life, is the fate of two of the prisoners already named, Cassape and Kemal Bey.

Cassape was found here at Pera by Alexandre Dumas, who took him, still a mere lad, with him to Paris, as an attendant, whose main duty was to prepare for his master his morning cup of coffee à l'*Orientale*. By living ten years with a *littérateur*, Cassape became himself *homme de lettres*, and besides working at three different journals, he gave

his country translations of "Monte Christo" and other masterpieces of his illustrious patron. Cassape also tried his hand at political pamphleteering, and was a champion of that party which, under the auspices of Edhem, Safvet and other liberal Pashas, have now the management of the so-called reforming Government. He however seems by his writings to have incurred the displeasure of the bluff Mahmoud, the brother-in-law of the Sultan, and it is to the favourite's enmity that he owes his condemnation to three years' imprisonment for a squib or caricature which even in Imperial France the most severe of Napoleon's policemen would have deemed below his notice.

Cassape was, on his arrest, thrown into one of the subterranean dungeons, but the confinement had so fearful and immediate an effect on his nervous constitution that he had to be removed to one of the upper cells at the end of three days. For it is, after all, rather from stolid than from evil mind that the Turks are cruel. A human being is treated as hardly any wild beast would be which his keepers despaired of taming, and of which they dreaded the approach. He is left there and somehow fed, but otherwise none of his wants, physical or moral, are attended to. Go and preach to the Turks that this is neither more nor less than horrible torture. They would not understand you, for no limb of the man is broken, no blow is inflicted. Yet it is the most awful kind of slow death a man could undergo, and he often

succumbs to it before his trial has begun or ended, before his crime has been placed beyond all doubt.

Kemal Bey, Midhat's best friend and most devoted partisan, had also risen to fame as an author before, in an evil hour, he was tempted to dabble in politics. His drama *Watan* or *Patrie* is a celebrated piece, the pride of the Turkish stage. He had travelled for years in Europe, he had become Frenchified to the very marrow of his bones, and was of great use to Midhat by his knowledge of the French language and of those French institutions which the aspiring Pasha hoped to acclimatise in his country. That his patron's disgrace should involve Kemal in the same fate was only too natural. What is difficult to understand is why the younger man should not either have been embarked with the elder and banished with him, or, at least, transported to some of the isles of the Archipelago, where those who have provoked the displeasure of men high in power at Stamboul disappear, are lost sight of and forgotten as utterly as if they had been sewn up in sacks and drowned in the Bosphorus.

Kemal Bey has been already shut up in the Central Prison five months, and was only examined the first day on his being brought in. The real cause of Kemal's misfortune was the same as that of Midhat's removal; it was jealousy on the part of the Palace, and especially of Mahmoud Damad, of the power and influence exercised by the ex-Grand Vizier as head of the Young Turkey party, and

author of the Imperial Constitutional Charter, which aimed at a curtailment of the authority of the Sultan and the Sultan's surroundings. It must be observed that Kemal had, by his manners and by his various accomplishments, won the Sultan's favour in the early days of his reign, and had been chiefly instrumental in removing Mehemet Rushdi from the Grand Vizierate, and thus promoting Midhat to the vacant post. Mahmoud Damad seemed determined that there should be no other Vizier-maker than himself. Kemal had in many instances attempted to put the Sultan on his guard against the Camarilla, which was encompassing the Sovereign in its toils, and thwarting the good intentions of his responsible advisers. There was therefore between Kemal and the head of the Camarilla war *à outrance*, and upon Midhat being removed, more vindictive proceedings were resorted to, to render Kemal's ruin decisive and irreparable.

This is at least the version of his own story with which Kemal Bey entertains his visitors at the Central Prison. It seems that at first, and before Midhat's fall, the intention had been to remove him by appointing him Ambassador to Persia, in the same manner as Zia Bey had been got rid of by sending him as Governor to Syria, the object being to prevent these young patriots being returned as Deputies to the Chamber, of which they would have been the very soul, as promoters of liberal measures and upholders of unlimited freedom of debate.



Failing this, and Midhat having been sent on his travels, Mahmoud Damad came to an understanding with the Minister of Police, who brought a criminal action against Kemal Bey, the indictment consisting of four principal counts. Of course, the prosecution was secret, and nothing more has been said about his alleged guilt to Kemal since his first hurried examination.

The first count charged Kemal with having said, in a private conversation with a few friends, that it would be expedient to replace on the throne, Sultan Murad V., or, failing this, to dethrone the reigning family, and raise to the supreme dignity some descendant of the Prophet, whom it would be easy to ferret out at Mecca. It was added that Kemal offered to effect this change, provided he were put at the head of 3000 men. The second count criminated Kemal, because Midhat was reported to have said that "In our days public opinion is stronger than Sultans and Grand Viziers put together." This truism seems to have brought about Midhat's fall; but why Kemal should be held answerable for another man's words, treasonable or not, the indictment does not explain. It is a clear case of the wolf and the lamb. "If you have not done it, then it was your father who did it." The third count rested on the evidence of a lieutenant-captain, Mahmoud Effendi, who pretends to have heard Kemal whispering to a young adept, "All will be settled in one night." Not one word more or less, but that was

looked upon as sufficient proof of a treasonable design being afloat. The fourth count referred to an alleged conversation between two individuals who, having just left Kemal's residence, entered a *café*, when one said to the other, "These gentlemen do not sleep, and liberty is safe."

Besides these principal counts, the indictment went on to state that Kemal, talking to a friend, had quoted an Arab proverb, which says, "Two will be made three," the original sense of it being that by a man and woman marrying, a third human being is produced. But the ingenious police here interprets the saying as a hint of Kemal that as two Sultans had in so short a time been done away with, a third would as speedily follow. But, in conversation with another friend, Kemal is charged with having been more explicit, saying that "he had lost all hope of Abdul Hamid, and must look out for something better."

Upon similar—almost childish—accusations, proving at the utmost juvenile imprudence and recklessness in familiar intercourse, a case is made out against Kemal, which, were there any ground to suspect him of conspiracy, would prove him totally unfit for the work he had taken in hand, and worthless even as a mere tool in other people's hands. Of course, the indictment, as above described, rests entirely on Kemal's own revelations, for nothing has as yet been or will ever probably be made public by the Government, and, as I said, no further proceedings against

him seem to have been taken. They shut him up for five months. No further communication was made to him ; no intimation as to his probable fate. He is for the present free to spend his days in his cell, conning over that Article X. of the Constitution which he helped to draw up, and which says : " Individual freedom is absolutely inviolable. No one can, under any pretext, undergo any penalty whatever, except in cases determined by the law, and according to the forms which the law prescribes." In the case of Kemal the law has not spoken.

But if the Constitution remained thus a dead letter in the capital, in the hands of the Central Government, before the eyes of the Sultan, and under the inspection of foreign diplomatists, what must be the case in those provinces where Pashas have been for centuries proverbially absolute, and where policemen and magistrates were wolves to the defenceless flock to which they were appointed shepherds ? Were I to refer to the reports current during the four or five months following upon the promulgation of the Constitution, I could easily harrow the reader's feelings by a chapter of horrors surpassing in intensity the long and yet condensed rhapsody of similar excesses which has been laid before him in another part of the work.\* But this volume has already exceeded its intended bulk, and I must limit my quotations to a few of the most flagrant cases,

\* Vol. i., Chapter XII.

the notoriety of which may be accepted as security for their authenticity :

“ At Perouschitza, at the time of the massacres of May, 1876, two resident Frenchmen were murdered in cold blood, with many of the native Christians. The French Consul laid a complaint before the authorities, denouncing the murderers, and offering to produce two witnesses of their act. A Vizierial letter, ordering the arrest of the criminals, was sent from Constantinople ; but the Mutesari, or local Governor, put off the execution of the order, pleading now the Ramazan, now the Bairam, with a hundred other pretexts. At last, indeed, he proceeded to apprehend the murderers ; but, only two or three days later, these were released on bail, and the two witnesses to the charge were found barbarously murdered. So much for Turkish justice in Bulgaria.”

The following is an extract from a letter dated Seres, in the Province of Adrianople, north-east of Salonica, February 20 :

“ The Turks only show us some forbearance as long as we are willing to supply them with meat and drink, and to put up with all their exactions and ill-treatments, and as long as we consent to work in their fields without remuneration. Poor or rich, the Turks are all equally bent upon oppressing us. Whatever they demanded has been granted to them. This year we have had to do all the labour in their fields before laying hand to our own. Nothing, however, has power to satisfy them, or to render them

more humane or considerate towards us. There is no limit to their violence or rapacity. Our beasts of burden must always be at their disposal ; they ride our horses, and compel us to find them in forage. They make equally free with our purses ; and whatever sum they ask must be forthcoming. Refuse them and you are beaten almost to death. A village priest who had been arrested and taken to prison at Seres, upon being set free and allowed to return to his parish, had the other day his house invaded by some Redifs, or soldiers of the Reserve, who deemed the imprisonment he had suffered an inadequate punishment for his alleged (imaginary) offence. Twice they attacked the house, and twice they were baffled, because the priest, warned of their intentions, had taken flight and sought refuge in the houses of some of his trusty parishioners ; whereupon his persecutors declared that if they caught him they would shave his beard and tear him to pieces. Then the priest, who had before been in the hands of these Philistines and knew what kindness he might expect at their hands, took up his gun and fled to the mountains, where he must live an outlaw's life as he best can. Not satisfied with getting from the peasantry whatever may be of use to them, the Turks take pleasure in doing the people all the harm they can, by wantonly destroying the trees in their fields, vineyards and gardens."

And again, in another letter from Adlieh, January 16th. "The tyranny of the zaptiehs is as rampant as

ever, but to add insult to injury it not unfrequently enlivens its cruelty by grotesque frolics and hideous practical jokes, the result of which is to degrade at the same time that it terrorises the defenceless population. One of these wretches, by name Hussein Agha, seems to have risen to some distinction by his blackguard pleasantries. It was his custom always to have himself quartered in the houses where the most attractive women lived, and to compel them to wait upon him. On Christmas Day (January 6th) he came down upon the village of Brankortsi, in the district of Adlieh, where he was to collect the taxes. The house he affected in the village was one of a certain Petko, because this man had two young and pretty daughters who, much against their will, had, during his stay in this house, to attend to their unwelcome guest as his handmaids. On the occasion of this recent visit, the zaptieh proceeded to the *Cmet*, or head man of the village, and made him billet him upon Petko. The *Cmet* answered that the thing was not feasible, as a few hours before two Albanians had been quartered there. The zaptieh, angry and disappointed at the thought that others should have the services of his two charming Hebes, threw himself upon the unfortunate *Cmet* and beat him unmercifully; disregarding his apologies that 'he had not been expecting the zaptieh, that Petko's house should never again be disposed of without consulting his convenience,' etc., and spurning his entreaties that 'he should spare him,

at least, on Christmas Day.' It was all in vain. The zaptieh was resolved upon vengeance, and went to work with method in his madness. He stabled his horse, and came out with bridle, saddle, and saddle-bags, and actually bridled and harnessed and then mounted the terrified and unresisting *Cmet*. The wretch rode his 'man-horse' up and down street, forcing him into the puddles where the mud was deepest, 'to the grievous damage of the fine new Christmas clothes he had on.' On their way to the house which the *Cmet* had destined for the zaptieh's residence, the rider came to the village inn, where he pulled up, alighted, and was soon surrounded by the villagers, all aghast at the sight of the strange equestrian group, yet never daring to interfere or remonstrate. The zaptieh went through all the antics of his cruel farce, threw the reins to the ostler, bidding him cool his steed by walking him up and down. He then bade the landlord bring out an armful of hay, and as the man laughed with forced good-humour, and ventured to intercede for the poor *Cmet*, the zaptieh struck him in the face with so heavy a blow as to stretch him almost senseless on the ground. He then insisted that hay should be brought out, and was obeyed with alacrity by one of the frightened waiters. The man-horse was brought up, tied by his rider to a post outside the door, and, whip in hand, bidden to eat. The poor man, now thoroughly unmanned, and bathing that forage with his tears, tried to comply with the

brutal order, and, with about the same appetite as the wooden horse of Courtray, took some of the hay between his teeth, when the zaptieh, satisfied with his achievement, and chuckling at his capital joke, went into the inn to have some drink, leaving his man-horse tied up outside, where the latter remained till the Polak of the village, an Albanian, came to intercede for him, and obtained his pardon and release from the zaptieh. The *Omnet*, a person of some importance in the village, and to whom the Government entrusts the collection of taxes to the amount of 200,000 piastres yearly, would never dare to lodge a complaint of this ill-treatment, as nothing would save him from the policeman's vengeance or from that of the body to which he belongs.

“This same zaptieh, Hussein Agha, being lately at the village of Boinitzza to collect the taxes, compelled those who were unable to pay to carry weights of seventy to one hundred okes (an oke is equal to more than  $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb.) on their shoulders for several hours.

“Another zaptieh, of an equally waggish disposition, having gone to the village of Gramada to requisition one hundred carts for a *corvee*, and finding that the villagers were out with their oxen, and that the Mukhtars could not muster the required number of carts, compelled the Mukhtars to climb up a tree, and to remain perched up there for several hours in the cold, striking their arms to their sides as if they had been flapping wings, and crowing ‘Ki-ri-ki-ki’ like dunghill cocks.



“A third zaptieh shut up some poor peasants for arrears of taxes in a room where he lit a pan of burning charcoal, only releasing them when they were in a state bordering on actual asphyxia.”

These few instances of the treatment which Bulgarians, like all other subjects of the Porte, have only too often to submit to at the hand of the police, as well as of soldiers, Bashi Bazouks, and other instruments of the Government of the Porte, and which I have taken almost literally from narratives, the very *naïveté* of which enhances the depth of their grimness, may be considered evidence of the equality and fraternity one may look forward to as the result of the promulgation of Midhat's Constitution, and of the justice and legality which the subjects of the Porte, and especially its non-Mussulman subjects, may expect from the executors of the law and the guardians of the public peace. Christians are still held in Turkey in the same estimation and subjected to the same outrages and indignities as were inflicted on the unfortunate Jews in the middle ages in many European communities.

Few incidents recorded in the Bulgarian horrors of May, 1876, equal the atrocity of the affair of Pozar of March 16th of the present year.

“About four weeks ago a gendarme (zaptieh) having been killed and two others wounded by the brigand Sait near the village Vissitra, in the district of Voden, province of Salonica, the Vali, or Governor-General, sent the Colonel of Gendarmerie, Alay Bey,

at the head of 150 gendarmes in pursuit of the brigand, at the same time bidding the Caimakams of Vodena, Sanitza, and Vervia to co-operate with Alay Bey, every man with his gendarmes.

“A man named Bekir Pehlevan, *multezim*, *dimier*, or tithe-gatherer, had bought (farmed), at the rate of 17,000 piastres a year for three successive years, the tithes of the village Pozar de Karatzova, a dependency of the district of Vodena, and consisting of 180 houses and an entirely Christian population. The man hoped to enrich himself by exacting the tithes twice in the year, and with that view he had recourse to the following stratagem : While Alay Bey was busy at Vissitra looking for the brigand Sait, the said Bekir Pehlevan waited upon him and assured him that in the village of Pozar there was hidden a far more famous brigand, whom he called Tanos. The Colonel, believing, or affecting to believe, the tithe-collector, abandoned the traces of the real brigand Sait, and collecting, besides his gendarmes, thirty or forty Turks in every village he went through, made his way into Pozar at the head of a battalion of 820 Bashi-Bazouks and encompassed the village with his forces in the night, pretending to be on the look-out for the imaginary brigand Tanos.

“On the following day, at daybreak, he went into the village with his battalion and searched all the houses for him. Having found no man answering that description, he left a garrison of thirty gendarmes in the village, with a hundred Bashi-Bazouks

under a lieutenant, and for his own part he removed with his battalion to Sumbotzko, a farm belonging to his friend Dourzi Caratzovali, a man looked upon as a very scourge to the whole country.

“Alay Bey being gone, the lieutenant left in charge of Pozar bade his men arrest all the male population of seven years and upwards, and beating them most unmercifully, he shut them up in the stables, crowded together like sheep in their pens ; by this means compelling the women to satisfy the unjust demands of the tithe-gatherer, Bekir Pehlevan. Remonstrances against the iniquity of these demands and against the unprovoked ill-treatment of their children were attempted by some of the more respectable imprisoned heads of the families ; but the lieutenant, by way of answer, threw them back into prison, ordered his men to get into the houses, and have themselves served by the women with the best the larders afforded, and allowed the old women, if they attempted to keep the young ones out of sight, to be exposed to the most infamous and obscene insults and tortures, which cannot be described to English readers. The village was thus militarily occupied for two nights and one day ; the men in durance, the women at the ravagers’ discretion. Some of the worst Turks of the neighbouring villages came up, seizing Christian labourers where they chanced to be in the field, and compelling them in their own ribald, grotesque way, to carry them pick-a-back, like beasts of burden, using their knives

as spurs to urge them on when, through age or illness, they fainted on the way.

“While this scene of riot and outrage was going on, the lieutenant sat, whip in hand, with the Mukhtar, or Mayor, and some of the best men of the village before him, bidding them deliver up the brigand Tanos. As these persisted in their denial of the existence of the alleged brigand, and asked, at all events, for time to look for him and set out on his track, the lieutenant took them under escort to his Colonel, Alay Bey, who threw them into prison.

“Some of the peasants had in the meanwhile found their way to Vodená, and described to the Caimakam the condition to which their village and people were reduced in consequence of the iniquity of the tax-gatherer. The Caimakam, as the custom is, appointed a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of one Christian and two Mussulmans. The Commission, acting under the influence of Dourzi Caratzovali, Alay Bey’s friend, made no report. The village meantime had been robbed, every house gutted, and hardly a tile left sound upon the roofs. All the produce of the poor people, their furniture, clothing, etc., or as much of it, at least, as had escaped the plunderers, became the property of the tithe-gatherer, who picked up a sum of 30,000 piastres in silver, while the sum for which he had farmed the village tithes for three years was only 51,000 piastres. The peasantry at last were left,

sorely beaten, terrified, and destitute of everything, after submitting for three days to every kind of outrage.

“The Archbishop of Salonica has lodged a complaint before the Vali, or Governor-General, but the latter has paid no attention, attributing the people’s complaints to mere disaffection, stirred up by ‘Russo-Greek intrigue.’ He will, however, appoint a Commission !”

Such is still, such will for a long time yet continue, the state of things in Constitutional Turkey. Those gentlemen who think that the Turk should have his chance, that time should be given to him to ripen his reforming schemes, should bear in mind that the foregoing narrative, for the fairness and honesty of which I vouch, merely describes a state of things which is normal in Turkey, although by the letter of a hundred Hatts and Firmans, by all the laws binding the Government to the people, and by all the treaties making it responsible to foreign states, such abuses as the farming out of tithes and taxes, the violation of person and domicile on the part of the police, ought to have ceased long since. Anything like security for the person and property of the men or for the honour of the women, anything like even an attempt at a fair administration of justice, cannot, and never will, be obtained here without the application of foreign coercion. Diplomats think that coercion would be a remedy worse than the evil. Be it so ; and let nothing more be said about

it. But in that case let nothing more be said about Turkey ; let us give up the silly pretence of waiting to see what may come of “ granting her a respite, of allowing her one more chance.” After seven times seven chances the Turk will still be the Turk, and “the Giaour the Giaour;” the latter an inferior animal, to be rough-riden, robbed, outraged, trodden under foot, cut to pieces by the former.

I shall conclude the quotations by a detailed account of the burning of the Bazaar of Van, in Armenia, a country fully as ill-used by the Turks as the most unfortunate Bulgarian districts.

“ On the 30th of November, old style, towards half-past eleven o’clock, Turkish time—*i.e.* half an hour before sunset—three soldiers entered the shop of Dlodian Siméon to buy candles. On leaving they dropped something in the shop, apparently a *coundak* (a bundle of combustible matters used by malefactors in Turkey, where incendiarism is only too common), and their deed was unperceived by the shopkeeper, who was then closing the shop, and who left immediately after fastening the shutters. Candles had also been bought by soldiers at other shops throughout the day. The fire broke out at half-past twelve—*i.e.* one hour after the soldiers’ visit to Siméon’s shop—and raged till past midnight. In six hours more than six hundred shops on the ground-floor were a prey to the flames. Strange to say, it was only towards half-past two that the Armenians within the town—the Bazaar is at some distance

outside the walls—were apprised of the occurrence, and hastened to save their merchandise. They found the Bazaar invaded by soldiers, by gendarmes, by Turks coming from a spot called ‘the Vineyards’ (Aikestan), from Ardamed, and other localities both near and far, all busy sacking, and pillaging, and spreading the conflagration by throwing burning brands. Vainly did the townsmen endeavour to save their wares and the money in their tills. They were pitilessly beaten back and compelled to return empty-handed. The Bishop Eremia and the Priest Boghos strove to stop the pillage, but they were in their turn terribly beaten by the soldiers, and it was not without extreme difficulty that they were able to escape with their life. Scarcely one in a thousand succeeded in rescuing a package or two of their merchandise or a small sum of their money.

“The inhabitants of ‘the Vineyards,’ roused, some at daybreak, some at sunrise, ran to the spot, and beheld the rich Bazaar of Van reduced to a heap of reeking ruins! They found nothing but half-consumed tatters of thick linen, scraps of paper, and other merchandise of lesser value, all objects of price having disappeared. Only the shops of the Turks, Charan Bey, Ghalib Bey, and others in the central parts of the Bazaar had escaped total destruction, and a few jewellers’ shops had had the same good fortune, but only Ghalib Bey’s stores and some of the Turkish provision shops were not pillaged.

“The clarions sounded throughout the night. The

soldiers thronged into the Bazaar in the utmost disorder; they plundered; they drove back by hard blows the owners of the shops. The wretched Armenian community would now with difficulty be able to find the means of subsistence for one day. They protest that they have been robbed of their gold and their wares by the soldiers; that search should be made among them; and search is being made—we shall see with what results.

“A shoemaker, by name Baghdolmian Kevook, upon attempting to defend his shop, was beaten so cruelly by the soldiers that he died of the blows on the morrow. Who knows how many may still die of the consequences of their wounds? The desolation of the people is heartrending. The wealthiest men in Van are now beggars; at least, fain would they beg did they only know of whom, but we are all brought to the same mendicant condition. The schools are shut up, for neither the churches nor the citizens can any longer supply the means to keep them open. And, as if all that were not enough, our very lives are threatened. ‘Giaours,’ they say, ‘be satisfied with what you have; be thankful that your lives are spared!’”

We were further told, “Unless help is sent the town of Van will soon be a desert, so far as its Armenian inhabitants are concerned; for many, despairing for themselves and their families, are preparing to migrate, and those who cannot follow will have to starve.”



Other letters assure us that—"Shopkeepers who were able to reach their shops and started away with their money and valuables, were intercepted and robbed of their burdens. One man thus intercepted was so injured that he afterwards died; one other body has also been recovered from among the *débris*. The losses of goods and money alone are estimated at £T.200,000, and if we add the buildings, account-books, etc., the whole loss would doubtless exceed £T.500,000—a crushing blow for a town of 30,000 to 35,000 inhabitants."

Such is the condition of the Christian people in Armenia. Here is a clear case of a frightful disorder caused by the men entrusted with the maintenance of order, and in a province where not only no disturbance, but even no symptoms of disaffection had hitherto been heard of. It is thus that alarming tidings reached us from Bulgaria in the months of September and October of 1875, before the slightest attempt at insurrection had been made. In Bulgaria, besides the soldiers and policemen, and the Mussulmans of high rank and authority, the Circassians were the people's scourge. In Armenia the ravagers and destroyers are the Koords, a nomad race, hovering on the frontier of the province, making frequent incursions into its interior, pouncing upon towns and villages, and spreading havoc and terror among the industrious and laborious rural population. The impression among the Christians in Armenia and elsewhere is that the Turks, jealous

of the superior thrift and intelligence of the subject people, and of the well-being arising from it, and contrasting it with the rapid decline and disappearance of their own race, wilfully resort to murder and robbery of the Christians, with a view to "keep them under," to prevent their too rapid spread and development. But whatever the real cause may be, the effect is undeniable. Enmity of race, tyranny, and anarchy, are decimating the Christian population, or, at least, stunting it in its growth.

Only a few weeks later a great fire broke out at Ada Bazaar, near Ismid. There was a loss of £T.40,000, by which, it seems, some wild Circassians managed to profit, if indeed they were not the originators of the calamity, as was the case with the soldiers at Van, and would have been the case in Erzeroum, had it not been for the foresight and timely interference of the Commander-in-Chief, who ordered away a battalion among whom the outrage had been plotted. But more than enough, I think, has been said to prove that the first element of all society, security for life and property, is wanting in Turkey, in a great measure owing to the impotence and improvidence, but partly, also, to the ill-will and race enmity of the Mussulman rulers. Armenians, Bulgarians, and other Christians are merely a defenceless flock, exposed to the devouring rage of such wolves as the Koords, Circassians, and other lawless tribes, and the Government, whose duty it ought to be to keep off the destroyers, not unfrequently abets

and countenances them in their ravages, and shares their prey with them. One can understand why it is that such a Government quarrelled with the Conference, and resented as an indignity the proposal, I believe, of Lord Salisbury, of a loan to be made to the Porte by the Belgian or by some other Government of several thousand well-disciplined gendarmes, who should become the nucleus of a respectable Ottoman police force. It is precisely this respectability which would interfere with the "perquisites" to which public functionaries, high and low, have been accustomed in Turkey till rapacity has become with them a second nature.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONCLUSION.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE.—ATTITUDE OF TURKEY—OF RUSSIA—OF ENGLAND.—THE RUSSIAN PROTOCOL.—THE EVE OF WAR.—THE TURKISH NOTE.—THE WAR AND ITS PROSPECTS.

THE Conference had gone asunder, and the question arose, what next? Turkey, apparently unaided and unadvised, had been able to withstand the seemingly unanimous wishes of Europe: she had slapped Europe in the face; she had obtained the most complete victory, yet the upshot caused blank dismay and disappointment rather than satisfaction to thinking men among Turks and Turkophiles. These began to feel that by her stubborn and defiant attitude, Turkey had disobliged what were hitherto useful friends at the same time that she had given mortal offence to inveterate enemies. Her victory left her utterly isolated, and with a reputation damaged by her disregard of all justice or decency in the protection and promotion of the authors of the atrocities in Bulgaria. The ill-will of her Christian subjects against Mussulman misrule, deepened by the disappointment of all their hopes and the downfall of their legitimate

aspirations, boded no good to the future internal peace of the country. Divergence of views as to the negotiation with the Powers excited dissensions in the Cabinet, and raised feelings of enmity against Midhat, who for his own part set no limits to his arrogance and gave offence in those quarters where men were already plotting his removal. Midhat's Constitution had become by this time as unpopular as the statesman who had framed it. The men who had hitherto merely sneered at it, evinced now a great dread of it and looked upon it as a Pandora's box, the opening of which would let loose all the elements of discord and add to the general confusion. It was perhaps from a sense of their uneasiness as to the eventual working of their National Charter that the Ottoman members of the Conference proposed as a last *dodge* to the European Plenipotentiaries that they should *prendre acte*, or take official notice of the Constitution in the *procès verbal* or statement of their proceedings, hoping thus to make the Powers sponsors of the Charter and vouchers for its execution. But the suggestion was unanimously scouted by the Plenipotentiaries.

The position was by no means comfortable. With the Servian and Montenegrin war still open, the Bosnian and Herzegovinian insurrection unsubdued, an immense, victorious, wasteful, but ill-officered and inefficient army on foot, with shattered finances, mountains of paper money, and the Constitution to contend with, Turkey had good reason to regret her

refusal of that European intervention which, however it might wound her pride, was meant as a friend's help in the sorest need. The mischief however was done, and what remained was to make the best of it.

M. de Chaudordy, the French Delegate at the Conference, had freely intimated to the Turks that before they thought of Constitutions it behoved them to make peace. The hint was taken by the Government of the Porte, whose first move after they were left masters of the situation, was to put themselves in communication with Belgrade and Cettinje for a settlement of their differences with the Principalities. Peace with Servia was easy, because that little state, thoroughly beaten, was at the end of its resources, and had already paid too high a price for foreign aid, and also because Turkey was either wise or magnanimous enough to put the most liberal interpretation on those conditions of the *status quo ante bellum*, which the Conference had proposed. Matters did not proceed with equal smoothness with Montenegro, both because the Turks had found that mountain cluster a harder nut to crack, and because a vague notion was entertained on both sides that, if brought to extremities, Prince Nicholas could always rely on Russian support. The negotiations between the Porte and the Prince's Envoys were carried on during part of February and March, then broke down, though it was understood that no hostilities would immediately ensue. It was a question left in

abeyance, subordinate to matters of a far more arduous and momentous issue.

For be it remembered Turkey was not at peace with Russia. The forces of that great empire had been for some time, and were being mobilised, and they hovered on the frontier, keeping Northern Turkey in constant alarms, leaving friends and foes in suspense, and, in short, undoing Turkey by that armed peace, which however disastrous to both must necessarily tell sooner on the smaller state. In the meanwhile, the internal disorders of Turkey could not fail to be aggravated by foreign intrigue; and when the work of dissolution was sufficiently advanced, the death-blow could safely be dealt.

It is easy to say, after the event, that Russia was bent on war from the outset. It seems natural to charge her with duplicity and attribute all her diplomatic manœuvres to a treacherous design to gain time. But as it turns out war was for Russia a sufficiently hazardous game to cause her uncasiness and to induce hesitation. Russia is not naturally a war-like country. General Ignatieff, who, in spite of his military rank, is rather a diplomatist than a soldier, often pointed to the fact that "although, thanks to her steppes, to her snows and her vast territory, Russia was invincible, because unassailable within her own boundaries, she was too bulky and clumsy, too unwieldy for aggressive warfare;" and indeed there is nothing in her military annals that Russia can look back upon with complacency. She has no

Waterloo, no Sedan, none of the world's decisive battles to boast of. Single-handed she never was able to do more than invade deserts and subdue wild tribes, she never thoroughly crushed Turkey, and in the Crimean war she scored not a single point against her Western adversaries. There could be no certainty of victory for Russia even had Turkey been her only enemy, and there was little doubt that were the struggle prolonged and Russia victorious, accounts would have to be settled with more enemies than that one. Russia had evidently good reason to look before she leaped, and it would have been folly on her part to threaten so long as material obstacles rendered it impossible for her to strike. Russia's position however was very clearly defined. The Emperor Alexander on the 9th of November, at Moscow, had proclaimed to his subjects and to the world, that "he hoped the Conference about to meet at Constantinople would bring peace," but added, "should this not be achieved, and should I see that we cannot obtain such guarantees as are necessary for carrying out what we have a right to demand, I am firmly determined to act independently, and I am convinced that in this case the whole of Russia will respond to my summons should I consider it necessary, and should the honour of Russia require it."

- The Conference took place, and failed; but it did not suit the Emperor's convenience, nor perhaps the disposition of his mind, to consider the failure irre-



trievable. He made a new attempt at a pacific arrangement; he tried Ignatieff's mission and the Protocol. After all, the six Powers had been of one mind at the Conference. They had made a joint proposal of reforms to the Porte, and upon the Porte's refusal they had withdrawn their Ambassadors from Constantinople, intending that act as a unanimous and simultaneous intimation of their displeasure. The Russian Emperor wished to ascertain how far joint action by the Powers would be carried. All arrangements based either on reason or authority had been used with the Porte, and with no effect. Persuasion was of no avail, and for his own part the Czar was bound to try coercion. But he thought that if the Powers stood fast in the position they had taken up at the Conference, if they continued to at least seem to be one in mind and will before the Porte, the Porte would have eventually to yield to their combined pressure. The actual use of force, he thought, would never be necessary: the mere show of it would work its purpose. Were war threatened by the six Powers, or even by Russia and England alone, Turkey would have to give in; and indeed the Emperor's calculations in that respect were so far correct that Edhem Pasha was heard to say that "he wished the Powers would join in a declaration of hostilities, for in that case resistance on the part of Turkey would be out of the question, and surrender would be justified by necessity."

But England would hear neither of force nor of

the show of force. She would consent neither to coercion nor to menace. She felt that reforms, and very radical reforms, were needed in Turkey ; and experience had told her that no reliance could be put on *iradés*, charters, or any other act by which the Porte engaged to redress her subjects' grievances. England could devise no scheme by which the Sultan's promises might be made to rest on a basis of solid guarantees, and it was against this reluctance on her part that the negotiations about the various Notes and Memorandums of a whole twelvemonth had invariably foundered, and that the proposal of the Russian Emperor for a joint occupation of Bulgaria by Russia, of Bosnia by Austria, and of the Straits by the united fleets of all the Powers, was summarily set aside. Be it observed that England herself had not always recoiled from the use of force against Turkey, for on a former occasion she had, in conjunction with France, obtained by armed coercion important reforms in the Lebanon. But in conjunction with Russia England would not go to war, or even run the risk of a war, against Turkey. Neither, on the other hand, would she fight in Turkey's defence. The pressure of popular clamour on the Derby-Disraeli Cabinet occasioned by the revelation of the Bulgarian horrors had by this time greatly abated. The Ministers repented the inconsiderate haste with which they had given in to it. They endeavoured, with some adroitness, to retrace their steps and to undo their own doings. They took

pains to convey to the Porte the assurance that their withdrawal of Sir Henry Elliot from Constantinople was not done upon an understanding with the other Powers, and was not meant as an expression of their displeasure at the rejection of their advice or proposal. Their Ambassador had only obtained leave of absence on account of bad health. And as Sir Henry's indisposition continued, her Majesty's Government sent Mr. Layard as a temporary substitute, thereby compelling the other Powers to fill the vacant places at their respective Embassies. The alternative for the Russian Emperor was now either an ignominious retreat or a disastrous war. And even yet he hesitated in his choice, and put off the evil moment so long that some rash men in Constantinople advised the Porte to put an end to the suspense by taking the initiative, and carrying the war into the territory of the sluggish Muscovite.

But the Russian sluggard required no such incitement. General Ignatieff's European tour was brought to an end, and the Protocol was laid in the same limbo with the Andrassy Note and the Berlin Memorandum. A last demand of Russia that the Porte should send a special agent to St. Petersburg to discuss the terms of a disarmament was rejected by the Ottoman Government with its usual spirit, and the quarrel was referred to the arbitrament of the sword.

On the 25th of April Prince Gortschakoff's de-

claration of war was conveyed to Constantinople through Tefvik Bey, the Ottoman Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg. It came upon us like a sudden clap of thunder, but, when its stunning effect was over, we found that it had cleared the air, removed an uncertainty which had become intolerable, and, although it ushered in all the evils of war, relieved us of the heavy burden of its anxious anticipation. This was perhaps the first time since my arrival at Constantinople that a public incident seemed really to stir up the apathetic population of Pera, though we had during this eighteen months' period outlived the deposition of two Sultans, the tragic death of one, and the mental derangement of the other, the scare of the Softa demonstration, the assassination of two Ministers, the meeting of a Conference and the proclamation of a Constitution, hostilities with Servia and Montenegro, and the fall and banishment of a Grand Vizier. Mr. Layard arrived on Friday, the 21st, and with him came the conviction that so far as one could depend on the wisdom and power of the English Government, peace might be considered quite safe. Unfortunately, at the very moment that the commencement of the duties of her Majesty's new Ambassador was to be formally made manifest by his State visit to the Sultan, every doubt as to the interruption of diplomatic relations between the Porte and the Cabinet of St. Petersburg was removed even from the most sceptical minds.

For the whole of Monday and Tuesday the

stately iron gate enclosing the front garden of the Russian Embassy was beset by a motley crowd, staring at it with such breathless interest as the Romans may be imagined to have exhibited when standing at the door of Janus's Temple. There was not much to be seen at first: *hamals*, or street porters, bent double under the burden of heavy boxes, would come now and then up one or the other of the two semicircular drives leading from the lodge to the palace, and enclosing a little plot of ground now all fragrant with the early spring verdure. Now and then again a clerk or dragoman with bundles of paper in his hand bustled out and exchanged a few hurried words with a visitor who bustled in, as the two met each other on the gravel of the broad carriage-way. At times a couple of saddle-horses waiting for somebody would be walked up and down by *cavasses* within the gates. At times somebody's carriage standing outside stopped the way in that Grande Rue de Pera which is here at its narrowest. The stout porter at the lodge, and his stouter wife, had enough to do to answer the questions of the well-to-do passers-by, who, on seeing that unusual assemblage of people, whispered their "What's in the wind? Flitting?"—"So it seems, sir."—"What, all of you?"—"So we are told."—"M. Nelidoff?"—"Very busy, sir." And upon this simple hint that something great was going on inside, and that a visit at that time would be sheer cruelty, the questioner went his way, to be

button-holed by the next passer-by, eager to share his news. The entertainment went on from eleven in the morning till about four in the afternoon. By this time M. Nelidoff had assembled the *personnel* of the Embassy in the palace chapel, where a *Te Deum* or thanksgiving for the happy termination of long laborious negotiations was piously sung. Presently the Embassy carriages and a few hackney coaches drove slowly up the avenue to the palace door; the Chargé d’Affaires and his suite took their seats, and the carriages filed off. At the moment M. Nelidoff passed the threshold, almost by a *coup de théâtre* a colossal double-headed eagle which rose on the roof-tree of the stately mansion suddenly disappeared. I had always thought the imperial bird was of grey stone, but it is only painted iron, and so fixed on hinges that it can be raised or laid down backward on the tiles at pleasure. Precisely at this juncture a *hodja*, or Mussulman half-priest, half-schoolmaster, in a Circassian garb, was seen at the gate, leaning against the wall of the porter’s lodge, and muttering prayers or spells from the Koran to call down Allah’s wrath on the “Moscovs,” and uttering curses against the enemies of Islam. The convoy of the Embassy having passed out, men who were in attendance for the purpose clambered up the railings of the iron gate, and threw back the tarpaulin or wax-cloth covers over the two bronze eagles which ornamented the posts on either side, when the *hodja*, raising both his hands, cast one

more wrathful glance, uttered one more withering curse at the now tenantless edifice, and withdrew. The scene might remind one of the "Ruin seize thee!" hurled by the Welsh bard at King Edward.

The crowd, ever wondering and ever shifting, thronged the narrow street till late in the evening, long after the iron gate had been shut, and hardly a peep of the house and the trees on the grass-plot and grove before it could be any longer caught through the railings. The same multitude encumbered the thoroughfare all the following day from morning to night. The vague interest of the Perote being satisfied, new gazers and wonderers came up across the bridge from Stamboul. The departure of the Russians was, so to say, an event incredible to all who had had no ocular demonstration of it. Indeed, many stood before the gate and shook the railings, as if to ascertain the fact that they were positively closed. The mob—for mob it was—was marvellously well behaved. The police had taken precautions, and even published exhortations, but none were needed. The people gazed their fill and loitered for a few minutes, but soon went their way upon the zaptieh on duty giving them a gentle hint to "move on." Not much was said by the bystanders, but their thoughts might be made out from their faces. There were dark, scowling Osmanli visages mentally counting the costs of the struggle the shutting of those iron portals portended; there were bright, bold Greek countenances; shrewd, fur-

tive Armenian looks, revealing vague hopes, and striving to hide rising exultation.

Trouble and anxiety meanwhile perplexed the minds and shook the hearts of the rulers of the country. A scheme suggested it was supposed by the English Ambassador, and slowly, alas! too slowly, matured in the minds of the Grand Vizier and Safvet Pasha, was being discussed in full Ministerial Council. Russia, it was suggested, might break off diplomatic relations, but was not at liberty to declare war. The Treaty of Paris, Article 8th, forbade it. By that clause it was stipulated that on any difference arising between the Porte and any of the Powers signing that treaty, no recourse to arms should be allowed till the matter at issue was referred to the other Powers for their mediation or arbitrament. It is true that Turkey herself had rejected all interference on the part of the Powers, and flatly challenged all Europe by her answer to the Conference and the Protocol. But, the Turks argued, in all their dealings with the Porte the Powers had acted at the same time as parties and judges. They had drawn up terms among them and laid them down for Turkey's acceptance, without admitting her to their deliberations. They had been the dupes of Russia, played into Russia's hands and made themselves one with Russia, doing in everything her behests. But if the quarrel was, as there could be no doubt, between Russia and Turkey, it was the duty of the Powers either to admit both parties to



their council or to exclude them both ; yet they had not only put Turkey out of court both at the preliminary meetings of the Conference and at the drawing up of the Protocol, but in both instances they had allowed Russia to take the lead in the transactions, and given sentence against Turkey without hearing her. It was possible to repair the error ; and there was still time to revise the sentence ; and Turkey asked that warlike execution should be stayed ; that both she and her adversary, Russia, should be summoned before the Areopagus of Europe ; that the Powers should sit and give judgment on both.

There was something plausible in the plan, and it was wisely laid out. Only time pressed, and the Turks will never learn the value of time. The circular by which Safvet Pasha proposed to communicate to the Powers the conciliatory disposition of the Porte was discussed in full Ministerial Council on Saturday ; it was there objected to, as its too humble and beseeching tenour was deemed inconsistent with the proud tone assumed so shortly before by the Ottoman Government at the Conference and in their answer to the Protocol, and a large majority of the members of the Cabinet voted that the undignified appeal should not be sent to its destination. On Sunday the defeated framers of the circular had an audience of the Sultan, who approved the circular, and decided that, with some modification as to manner, not to matter, the note should take its course.

Had the Sultan been an absolute master like his predecessors, or had he even as a constitutional Sovereign strained a point in favour of his authority, and *motu proprio* at once flashed that pacific document through the wires to all Europe, no one could say to what results England, France, and the other peace loving States might have brought Turkey's new proposal. But all Monday was lost in tinkering at that unfortunate note ; on Tuesday it was ready, and it was to be laid before the Council for new deliberations, but in the meanwhile, that same day, at ten o'clock in the morning, Prince Gortschakoff sent through Tefvik Bey, the decisive message, and found the advisers of the Ottoman crown still consulting about the means, dignified or otherwise, by which war could at the eleventh hour be averted. There was concourse and agitation enough all that day at the Galata Bourse and at the Pera Clubs. People brought out their betting-books, and wondered whether a wager about war or no war should be paid at once upon the announcement of hostilities, or whether the money was only due after the first shot was fired. The question was settled before evening by the intelligence that the Russians had already crossed the Pruth, and the Turkish circular was met with the answer that it was "too late."

We were now at open war, and my business in Constantinople was at an end. Constantinople was soon threatened with an almost universal blockade. Our land mails *viâ* Odessa and Varna were stopped

and the mails conveyed by the French and Austrian steamers to Marseilles and Brindisi, though they started twice a week, Wednesday and Friday, arrived at Paris and London on the same day, so that we were virtually reduced to one weekly communication with the great European centres, and it took twice as much time as used to be employed by those land-mails of which we had however so often complained before the outbreak of hostilities. As for the telegraph, the Government of the Porte annoyed us so greatly by sending us back at least one out of three of our despatches, that in the end we lost heart, and lived as if the electric wires had never been invented. By the kind intercession of Mr. Layard and General Kemball, I entertained some hope of being allowed to accompany this latter gentleman to the headquarters of the Ottoman army in Armenia, but the Grand Vizier would listen to no reasons or entreaties, and nothing was left for me but to put an end to my mission. On the 24th of May I took my berth on board the French mail steamer *Scamandre*, and travelled to my English home *viâ* Athens and Brindisi.

I looked round on those glorious shores of the Bosphorus on the eve of quitting them, and I fancied I could read at one glance all the phases of that history of the Eastern question, of which the last two years had unfolded before me one of the most interesting episodes. •

The Bosphorus is at the bottom of all the mischief. Intended by nature to be the seat of the greatest of

the world's empires, this region has never been in the hands of a truly imperial people. For more than four centuries it has been overrun by a brave but unimprovable nomad race, which came in at once like an overwhelming tide, but has been ever since slowly but surely receding. The conquering race, without ever being worsted, has however been incessantly ousted. Greece, Roumania, Montenegro, Servia, have been one by one, almost without a struggle, slipping from their rulers' grasp. It began to dawn on all mankind, and upon the Turks themselves, that Islam had no abiding home in Europe. Brought in from the outset, and tolerated for so long a lapse of years, less by reason of its own strength than by the weakness arising from the division of the European states, it has been for centuries losing ground in consequence of insurrections, powerless in themselves, but crowned with success, thanks to the reluctant, yet efficient, aid of European diplomacy. The Turk was proclaimed to be a necessity in Europe, but it was no less fated that, one after the other, his European possessions should be wrested from him. Strong enough for conquest, yet not sufficiently intelligent for government, the Turk must suffer the Greek, the Wallach, and the Slav to live either under another's or under their own rule. When Bosnia and Herzegovina broke out two years ago, it was clear to all men that another Roumania or another Servia was teeming in the womb of fate.

The jealousy of the great Powers forbade. Those

so had enthroned a Prussian Prince at Bucharest, one who had bidden the Osmanli to relinquish his hold of Belgrade, had resolved that Turkish dissolution should go just so far and no farther. "The Turk," they said, "was a necessity in Europe. Every loss of the Crescent had been a gain to the Russian Eagle. It was time that the wings of the bird of prey should be clipped. All Europe should stand up for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Sooner than Russia should break up Turkey, let there be a war between Russia and Europe." All the evil, it was allowed, arose from Turkish misgovernment. The Sultan's subjects had undoubted grievances; but there were no wrongs that could not be redressed; no disorders that admitted of no cure. Only it was added, "not a little of the evil was factitious; the outcry was in a great measure mere cant. The disturbances might, in the main, be traced to Russian intrigue."

It was upon this ground that Europe went to work. Five of the great European Powers mistrusted Russia, yet they all joined Russia in an attempt to heal the wounds of Turkey's revolted provinces. They compounded with what they described as Russian duplicity and treachery; unwilling to go to war with Russia, they combined with her to keep the peace. "After all," they agreed with Russia, "the Christians in Turkey have rights to vindicate, and interests to safeguard. The Turk must reign over his provinces, but these must govern

themselves. An end must be put to bloodshed, but not without removing the causes which led to it."

It was in this spirit and upon these principles that diplomacy proffered its mediation. The game was between Russia, who knew her own mind and worked out her own ends, and five Powers, who accused Russia of being at the bottom of the evil, yet followed her lead in all transactions intended to devise the remedy.

The result could be easily anticipated. We outlived the Consuls' Congress at Mostar, the Andrassy Note, the Berlin Memorandum; but blood continued to flow, and presently the efforts intended to localise the struggle led to Servia's and Montenegro's participation in it, to the abortive rising in Bulgaria, and the "atrocities" by which it was put down. All these events widened the breach between Russia and the other mediating Powers, these latter contending that Servia's and Montenegro's *levée des boucliers* and Bulgaria's premature movement were only the result of Russia's tenebrous work. It might be so altogether. I am myself inclined to believe that it was so in the main; the fault of the European diplomatists was not in suspecting or even boldly accusing Russia; it was on the contrary in not openly denouncing and manfully opposing her.

A propitious fate offered them in the Palace Revolution of Constantinople of last year, an excellent opportunity for shaping their own course in perfect independence, at least, if not in antagonism

to Russia. Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz was deposed and died; General Ignatieff fell with the Government of which he was supposed to be the evil genius. In the absence of the wily Ambassador the five Powers had all the internal and external affairs of Turkey in their own hands. Their mission was to bring about a peace and at all events an armistice between the Porte and its vassals of Servia and Montenegro, and to propose a *modus vivendi* in which the Bosnians and Herzegovinians might acquiesce.

They were at it for three months and achieved nothing. Europe seemed to acknowledge its impotence to act without Russia. Ignatieff came back, and with him the armistice, the negotiations for peace and the Conference. In all these matters Russia's perfidy was, in the opinion of her adversaries, fully transparent. It was so, perhaps; it was so, no doubt; but what gave Russia the power to lead Europe by the nose with such obvious deceits and hollow pretences? What but the helplessness arising from division among the five Powers themselves, and the incapacity of some of them of knowing their own wishes and making up their own minds? In the Conference Russia took the lead, and of course she so conducted it as to determine its future. Whether honestly or otherwise, Russia always thought and declared that no amount of persuasion could bring the Turks to hear reason. She was for her own part bent on coercion. Whatever

may be thought of the double dealing of her statesmen or diplomatists, whatever may be the truth with respect to the ascendancy exercised by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg over Servian and Montenegrin Princes, with respect to the manœuvres of Panslavist Committees, and the intrusion of Russian officers as volunteers in the Servian ranks, one point is beyond dispute, that the Emperor Alexander spoke out honestly and distinctly at Moscow. He would try with his European brethren how far negotiation could go towards settling the Eastern difficulty ; but arguments failing, he was determined to resort to force.

After that declaration it was evident that, unless the five Powers were also disposed to adopt that extreme remedy, either the Conference should never have come together, or should instantly have broken up. But the Conference went its way ; Russia, we are told, probably with truth, in obedience to insidious purposes of her own, reducing her demands to the very lowest terms, while other Powers gave the Turks clearly to understand that even these lowest terms need not be accepted, as no coercion was meant and none need be feared.

The Conference broke up, the Ambassadors went home defeated, yet keeping up to the last that harmony of views and unity of action which had been a sham from the beginning. Safvet Pasha, as we have seen, said to these diplomatists as they paid their farewell visit, " But, gentlemen, why are you going ?" And he



aid, as Prince de Reuss, Count Zichy, and Count Jortí, and even M. de Bourgoing reappeared, "But, gentlemen, what brings you back?" The six had departed together in February; it was to be supposed that something like joint action on the part of their respective Governments would ensue. The Governments themselves seemed to feel it, as they listened to Russia's proposal for a protocol, the upshot of which was of course to be the same as the result of the Conference.

In the midst of all these petty diplomatic shifts and devices, only one thing was settled beyond dispute. The Emperor Alexander was true to his word. Reason having failed, he appealed to the sword. The other Powers hastened to proclaim their neutrality, and to assure the Porte that "although they could not take Turkey's part in the conflict, no coercion on their part need be apprehended."

It was by such stages that the Herzegovinian insurrection ripened into the Russo-Turkish war. Of the issue of this contest as yet little can be foreseen. The Russians carried everything before them in Asia at the outset; they lost the ground there even more quickly than they had won it. They have now (July 25) crossed the Danube, and rapidly pressed through the Balkans; but their retreat may perhaps on this side also be as rapid as their advance. But let whichever of the parties have the upper hand, the war must end in peace, and terms will have to be agreed to, either by negotiation

between the parties, or by the mediation of the European Powers. What gains Russia may reap for herself, to what extent her ambition will have to be gratified, must depend on the fortune of war, for of course her protests about her unwillingness to claim anything for herself, her hints as to the surprise which her moderation has in store for Europe, are mere deceptions in keeping with the perfidy which has characterised her policy throughout. But, after all, other questions besides the rearrangement of the boundaries of the two empires will have to be discussed and settled. The condition of the subjects of the Porte, the terms of vassalage of her Servian, Roumanian, and other dependencies will have to be determined; and then, supposing even Russia to have been so unsuccessful, or even so thoroughly beaten as to have to submit to any terms Turkey may dictate, to what extent do we suppose the rest of Europe to be willing to allow the Porte to have in everything her own way? Roumania is already openly at war with Turkey, so is Montenegro, and Servia will find it difficult to avoid participation in the struggle. Supposing Turkey to get the better of these minor foes as well as of her great enemy, are those principalities to be entirely at her discretion? Are those principalities, which have for so many years been in all but in name independent states, who have been recognised as such by the Powers, and whose increase and development has been in a great measure the work of guaranteeing

donia and Albania, or the cession of Thessaly, Epirus, and Crete to Greece? This Russo-Turkish war, to which the Herzegovinian insurrection led us, threatens therefore to carry us an immense step forward towards the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, unless the European Powers abandon their policy of neutrality, unless they declare war to Russia in behalf of Turkey, and unless, if they conquer, they have some plausible plan at hand for a satisfactory solution of the Eastern question—a solution, come what may, which is no longer compatible with the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, if by that integrity we are to understand any limitation of the independence of the Danubian Principalities, or the denial of self-government to Bosnia, Bulgaria, and other provinces.

If it were not too idle to “cry over spilt milk,” it would be natural to observe that the negotiations of two years and the wars of, Heaven knows how long a period, will land us precisely on the ground we occupied at the outset—*i.e.*, on the necessity of wresting from the Porte some of its European provinces, either by erecting them into semi-independent principalities, like Roumania and Servia, or by establishing them on a footing of autonomy, as was done in the case of the Lebanon and Samos, and as it should have been done for Crete. Had such a measure been enforced on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the joint name of the Powers, two years ago, we might have been spared the Bulgarian

rection and its concomitant atrocities, theilities with Servia and Montenegro, and finally Russo-Turkish war, and all the complications which it may be fraught.

ut, it may be objected, by giving independence he lands on the Danube we incur the risk of ing so many petty states, independent only in e, and really subject to Russia. We give Panism a development which must needs break up aria as well as Turkey, and threaten Europe elf with absorption. To hear certain reasoners, ould seem that there is no other way of prevent-Europe from becoming "all Cossack" except by ng her "all Bashi-Bazouk." Lest Russia ld have anything, let Turkey keep all she has, ren get back what she has been made to renounce. he Muscovite should become master of Con- tinople, let the Osmanlis recommence their inroads i Hungary and Vienna, and their attacks on unto and Nice! But, meanwhile, unless Turkey es out as the stronger in the present conflict, the way to protect her integrity will be found in a aration of war to Russia by all or by some of the opean Powers. To prevent Russia from establish- her sway on the Danubian provinces, Turkey's s will have to take those provinces in hand; and n they have done that, when they have rid those inces of the presence of the Northern invader, t will they do with them? How are they to ose of them? Give them back to the Porte

for that Government to do with them as it lists ? allow and sanction a re-establishment of the system against which they themselves have emphatically protested, and which they wished to reform by any means short of coercion ? But what if the Porte insists on her own system ? What if she turns a deaf ear to all means of persuasion ? Will the Powers have recourse to those coercive measures which they refused to take in concert with Russia, which Russia did not take upon herself single-handed without incurring their animadversion and displeasure.

The more I think of it the more firmly convinced am I that the only way in which the Powers could and should have sought a solution to the Eastern question would have been either to act in cordial unity and perfect good faith with Russia, or in open antagonism to her. I am equally confident that the alternative continues to be the same at the present day, and that it will have to be acted upon either in the course of the present war or at the end of it. Whatever the European Powers do not wish to fall into the hands of Russia they will have eventually to take into their own hands. England has already declared that "come what may, the Russians shall never have Constantinople and the Straits." There is therefore every appearance that, the Turks being unable to hold their capital against the enemy, the English are preparing to take it under their protection ; Austria may have to occupy Bosnia ; France or Italy Albania, etc. In any

such events, on what ground or by what title are the Powers to establish themselves in Turkish territory ? as friends and allies of the Porte, no doubt ; but must we add as supporters of its Government through thick and thin, and thus as partakers of all its abuses and enormities ? Hardly, I should think. As mediators between the Porte and its subjects, with a settled purpose to improve the condition of the latter, and to secure them as much self-government as may do away with the undue ascendancy of the dominant over the subject races ? This ought to be the only righteous and humane course. But how are all such conditions to be obtained from the Porte ? By gentle means of persuasion ? But how did the Porte receive advances of the same nature and to the same effect ? How did it fulfil its engagements for the same purpose at the close of that Crimean war in which she only escaped imminent destruction at the hand of Russia by the exertions of the Western Powers ? There never was, never can be, any reliance on Turkey's promises. The Powers know it ; they have always proclaimed it, always insisted on "guarantees." Will then coercion be employed ? But what a pity it is that the Powers always so obstinately set their hearts against that remedy when it was proposed by Russia ; that they never would accept Russia's offer to act in concert with them for its application, and that they so soundly rated her for resorting to that remedy single-handed, against their advice and in

defiance of their displeasure ! By their words they blamed Russia ; by their acts they may ultimately have to justify her. They may war with Russia to hinder her work, but they must eventually take that work upon themselves. Two years' melancholy history has brought us to a war of which we cannot foresee the end, but which can only terminate by reviving that question of "guarantees," that question of "coercion," which the Powers, in their most reasonable, but most unreasoning, jealousy of Russia, constantly refused to take into their calm and serious consideration. The Turk, it ought to be sufficiently clear, cannot govern his subjects, cannot govern himself. He must submit to foreign rule, either direct or indirect ; he must be guided by foreign influence. Heaven forbid that such ascendancy should be exercised by Russia, or, at least, by Russia alone ! But, whether in combination with or in opposition to Russia, the Powers will find that they cannot escape that task of governing the Turk and the Turk's subjects, which is visibly assigned to them by Providence.

THE END.











